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Assistance in mine action

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Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report, covering the period from August 2015 to July 2017, is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/80, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of that resolution, including on relevant United Nations policies and activities.

2. The report describes the activities and achievements of the 12 United Nations entities comprising the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action,[1] which is chaired by the United Nations Mine Action Service. Specifically, it charts the progress made in realizing the objectives of the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018. The development of a follow-up strategy will be initiated in 2018.

3. The year 2017 marks the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention) and the establishment of both the Mine Action Service and the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action. Employing a needs-driven, people-centred approach, the United Nations has produced tangible results in mine action across continents for two decades.

* A/72/150.

[1] The 12 departments and offices of the Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds and programmes are: the United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the World Bank are observers.

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4. Humanitarian mine action demonstrates how the United Nations is responding, in a holistic and tangible manner, to threats to human life and peace. The response involves actors across the "peace continuum" of the United Nations system and extends to partnership with regional organizations, civil society and the private sector. Mine action strengthens the nexus between peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. As I noted on 4 April 2017, the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, "peace without mine action is incomplete peace".

Global trends in conflict

5. According to a study by the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research,[2] deaths due to conflict increased six-fold between 2011 and today. The study also identifies today's conflicts as more intractable, more asymmetric and harder to resolve using traditional models of political settlement.

6. Conflicts today tend to be concentrated in urban areas,[3] affecting an estimated 50 million people who live in cities.[4] Armed conflict is a major driver of displacement, as civilians are forced to flee violence and attacks that can injure or kill, damage or destroy homes and hinder access to essential services. In 2016, UNHCR reported that forced displacement had hit record levels, with a total of 65.3 million people globally displaced from their homes owing to conflict or persecution. Many had crossed international borders in search of protection and assistance as refugees, although the majority were displaced within their own countries, where they remained at risk of violence and other threats to their welfare.[5]

7. Over the last two years, there has been a reversal in the previously downward trend of casualties of landmines and explosive remnants of war. Among 18 countries and territories that provide data to the United Nations, the number of casualties (persons injured or killed) from landmines, victim-activated improvised explosive devices, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war increased by almost 40 per cent from 2015 (2,615 casualties) to 2016 (3,608 casualties).[6]

8. Similarly, in *Landmine Monitor 2016*,[7] the International Campaign to Ban Landmines reported a 75 per cent increase in casualties from landmines and related devices, from 3,695 in 2014 to 6,461 in 2015. The latter figure was the highest number of casualties registered since 2006.[8] While casualties due to anti-personnel mines decreased, the overall increase was driven by casualties from victim-activated improvised explosive devices, anti-vehicle mines and explosive remnants of war. The casualties of "unknown mines or explosive remnants of war" more than quadrupled, highlighting the increased challenges of data collection in active

[2] https://i.unu.edu/media/cpr.unu.edu/attachment/2534/OC_10-CivilWarTrendsandChangingNatureofArmedConflict-05-2017.pdf.

[3] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *States of Fragility 2016: Understanding Violence* (Paris, 2016).

[4] International Committee of the Red Cross, *Urban Services During Protracted Armed Conflict* (Geneva, 2015).

[5] www.unhcr.org/en-us/news/latest/2016/6/5763b65a4/global-forced-displacement-hits-record-high.html.

[6] The 18 countries/territories that report casualty data to the monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018 are Afghanistan, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Libya, Mali, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan and Tajikistan; and Abyei (Sudan), Darfur (Sudan) and Western Sahara.

[7] Available from www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2016/landmine-monitor-2016.aspx.

[8] Although these trends are affected by greater availability of data in some countries, these increases are consistent across many countries where the data collection capacity is consistent.

conflicts where insecurity hinders access and populations are unfamiliar with the devices they encounter. The countries with the highest casualty numbers were Afghanistan, Libya, Yemen, the Syrian Arab Republic and Ukraine; in response, the United Nations prioritized assistance to those five countries during the reporting period.

Role of mine action in conflict prevention and peace sustainment

9. Through partnerships with States, regional arrangements and civil society, mine action operates effectively and efficiently across the full spectrum of United Nations peace and security activities. Mine action aids conflict prevention through clearance and disposal of landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, denying access to explosive materials which can be "harvested" and used to construct new and different devices. The employment of demobilized soldiers and individuals from affected communities in mine action also plays a role in generating conditions conducive to peace.

10. In peace processes such as that of Colombia, mine action has proven an effective means to make confidence-building and peacebuilding gains in complex and politically sensitive environments. The number of ceasefire and peace agreements that include mine action has increased, demonstrating a growing recognition of the importance of mine action in sustaining peace.

11. In humanitarian contexts, mine action is critical to the protection of civilians through the provision of immediate life-saving risk education and clearance activities that limit harm to civilians, enable humanitarian operations and facilitate the return of displaced populations. It is essential that mine action be integrated into the planning and programming of humanitarian responses in conflict-affected contexts from the outset, as promoted by the Global Protection Cluster.

12. The United Nations and its partners work together to ensure that humanitarian responses are complemented by medium- and long term-recovery, resilience and development initiatives. The recent United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) study *Leaving No One Behind: Mine Action and the Sustainable Development Goals*[9] examines this connection in further detail. To strengthen the linkage between mine action and livelihoods, poverty reduction and peacebuilding, in 2016 UNDP launched its Support Framework for Development and Mine Action.

13. Effective mine action, driven by needs and centred on people, is grounded in, and promotes and protects, international human rights law and international humanitarian law. The normative frameworks governing mine action promote victim assistance and the inclusion and participation of survivors in all aspects of life.

14. The Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action has demonstrated how the Organization can work across entities, agencies, funds and programmes, and with partners, to deliver a coordinated response to the peace and security, humanitarian and development challenges affecting an increasing number of people.

II. Update on international instruments relating to mine action

15. With international humanitarian law and human rights law often violated by parties to conflict, the United Nations has reinforced its advocacy for the universalization and full implementation of relevant international legal frameworks.

[9] Available from www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/mine-action-and-the-sustainable-development-goals.html.

Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects

16. To date, 124 States have ratified or acceded to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, with Lebanon being the most recent country to join. Moreover, 103 States are party to the Convention's Amended Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices, and 92 States are party to Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War.

17. I welcome the outcomes of the Fifth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention, held in Geneva from 12 to 16 December 2016, particularly the decision to consider the issue of mines other than anti-personnel mines in 2017 (CCW/CONF.V/10, sect. III, decision 3), since there is currently only limited regulation of the use of these mines, which continue to injure, kill and deny access to resources.

18. Given the increase in casualties of improvised explosive devices, I welcome the declaration on improvised explosive devices adopted in 2016 by the Conference of High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II (CCW/AP.II/CONF.18/6, annex V). The United Nations has continued to support States parties' implementation of Amended Protocol II, particularly through the provision of technical expertise and sharing of experiences and lessons learned. During the reporting period, States parties produced a compilation of guidelines and best practices to address the diversion or illicit use of material used to produce improvised explosive devices. They exchanged information on incidents and raised awareness of work being undertaken in other forums to enhance international cooperation and assistance for mitigating the problem (see CCW/CONF.V/10, sect. IV, para. 62).

19. During the reporting period, the United Nations continued to assist States parties in implementing their obligations under Protocol V to alleviate and prevent the human suffering caused by explosive remnants of war. States parties also strengthened cooperation on victim assistance by promoting the Plan of Action on Victim Assistance adopted by the High Contracting Parties[10] and developing a reporting template on victim assistance. I renew my call to States parties to implement article 4 of the Protocol, which was designed to facilitate the survey and clearance of explosive remnants of war.

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

20. To date, 162 countries (84 per cent of Member States) have ratified or acceded to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. I urge States which are not yet party to this major instrument to adhere to it as soon as possible.

21. I congratulate Belarus on fulfilling its stockpile destruction obligations in 2017. With considerable financial and technical assistance from the United Nations, over 51 million stockpiled anti-personnel mines have been destroyed to date. Of the 90 States that at one time reported stockpiled anti-personnel mines, 87 have completed their destruction. In addition, 30 States parties to date, including most recently Algeria, have completed their clearance obligations under the Convention.

[10] See www.un.org/disarmament/geneva/erw/victim-assistance/plan-of-action/.

The United Nations is working in partnership with many of the remaining 31 States[11] to fulfil this goal.

22. To further this progress and continue towards full implementation of the Maputo Action Plan 2014-2019, adopted at the Third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention, held in June 2014, I encourage States parties to do their utmost to meet their obligations by 2025.

23. The year 2017 marks the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Convention. The Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties, to be held in Vienna at the end of 2017, will be an opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments, as well as reaffirm and reinvigorate commitment to the implementation of the Convention.

24. I reiterate my call upon the international community to secure the resources necessary for the operation of the Convention and to comply with relevant financial obligations. I urge States in a position to do so to provide resources to those affected States committed to meeting their obligations.

Convention on Cluster Munitions

25. Much progress has been made in the implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, in particular the destruction of stockpiles and the clearance of cluster munition remnants. To date, 102 States are party to the Convention, with 14 Member States[12] joining in this reporting period. I congratulate Mozambique on completing its clearance obligations in December 2016, ahead of its deadline, and the six States parties[13] that completed the destruction of their stockpiles during the reporting period.

26. At the First Review Conference of States Parties to the Convention, held in September 2015, States parties adopted the Dubrovnik Declaration, in which they reaffirmed their commitment to ending the harm caused by cluster munitions and achieving a world free of cluster munitions; they also adopted the Dubrovnik Action Plan 2015-2020 for implementation of the Convention up to the Second Review Conference.

27. The Sixth Meeting of States parties to the Convention, held in Geneva in September 2016, adopted a political declaration in line with the Dubrovnik Action Plan, in which States parties committed themselves to fully implementing their obligations before 2030.

28. Notwithstanding this progress, the alleged use of cluster munitions continued in a number of conflicts during the reporting period. This worrying situation shows the need for States that have not yet done so to accede to the Convention without delay and to take the necessary steps to end the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of this insidious weapon.

29. To promote the effective implementation of victim assistance obligations, the document entitled "Guidance to an integrated approach to victim assistance"[14] was published by the Coordinators for Victim Assistance and International Cooperation

[11] Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Mauritania, Niger, Oman, Peru, Senegal, Serbia, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

[12] Belize, Benin, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Iceland, Madagascar, Mauritius, Palau, Paraguay, Rwanda, Slovakia, Somalia and South Africa.

[13] France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mozambique and Sweden.

[14] http://www.clusterconvention.org/2016/11/30/new-guidance-on-an-integrated-approach-to-victim-assistance/.

and Assistance. The publication is intended to assist States in improving the quality of life and upholding the rights of victims.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

30. Persons with disabilities, including survivors of mines and explosive remnants of war, require long-term assistance by their own governments, including through international cooperation, in response to their needs and human rights. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides for an inclusive approach that promotes, protects and ensures the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities. This global framework, together with provisions in other instruments, is critical for those affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war. To date, 172 States and one regional organization are party to the Convention, and 96 States have ratified or acceded to its Optional Protocol.

31. During the World Humanitarian Summit held in May 2016, a number of States, United Nations entities and civil society organizations adopted the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. I encourage Member States to continue endorsing the Charter and signatories to fulfil the commitment made during the Summit to ensuring that no one is left behind, including survivors of landmines and other explosive remnants of war.

III. Progress report on strategic objectives of the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018

32. This section reports on progress towards meeting the strategic objectives of the Strategy on the basis of data collected by the monitoring and evaluation mechanism and case studies provided by United Nations entities. The monitoring and evaluation mechanism currently collects data from 30 countries and territories where the United Nations has mine action programming.

Strategic objective 1: Risks to individuals and the socioeconomic impacts of mines and explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions, are reduced

33. In the last two years, the global casualty rate due to landmines and explosive remnants of war has risen, reflecting the increased impact of conflict on civilians across the world. Nevertheless, in this context, humanitarian mine action has generated positive outcomes throughout conflict-affected communities. In the first six months of 2016 alone, over 163 square kilometres of land potentially contaminated with landmines and 22 square kilometres potentially contaminated with explosive remnants of war were rendered safe through mine action, across the 25 countries and territories for which data were available.[15]

34. The clearance of key infrastructure and facilities is a high priority for communities recovering from conflict. Among those 25 countries and territories, the percentage of affected hospitals cleared of landmines and explosive remnants of war increased from 50 per cent in 2014 to 93 per cent at the end of 2016. Furthermore, 89 per cent of affected educational facilities and 70 per cent of affected markets

[15] The data, assembled by the monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the United Nations Strategy on Mine Action, pertain to Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Jordan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libya, Mali, Myanmar, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, the Sudan and Tajikistan; and Abyei (Sudan), Darfur (Sudan) and Western Sahara.

were rendered safe by the end of 2016. These achievements are particularly impressive given the increase in reports of affected infrastructure over the same period. For example, the number of hospitals reported to be affected rose from 8 to 169 between 2014 and 2016, and the number of markets reported to be affected rose from 31 to 670.

35. Risk education is an essential tool for saving lives. In 2016, almost 6 million people were provided with mine and explosive remnants of war risk education by the United Nations and its partners in 18 countries and territories, compared to over 2 million people in 2015. These figures reflect the increased demand for risk education by the rising number of people affected by conflicts in recent years. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reports that risk education reached almost 4 million children in 2016, a significant increase from 2015. The Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen accounted for more than two thirds of the children reached in 2016.

36. In Afghanistan, 97 square kilometres of potentially dangerous land were rendered safe as a result of mine action operations, benefitting almost 170,000 individuals in affected communities. In addition, 459 square kilometres of firing ranges previously used by international forces were cleared. Although the number of casualties attributed to landmines declined, casualties from explosive remnants of war and victim-activated improvised explosive devices rose significantly during the reporting period. In 2016, 86 per cent of all civilian casualties resulting from explosive remnants of war in Afghanistan were children, making it the leading cause of conflict-related child casualties after ground engagements. Those provinces reporting intense ground engagements also report the highest number of victims of explosive remnants of war. At the request of the Government of Afghanistan, the United Nations provided assistance in assessing the explosive contamination of areas where ground engagements had taken place.

37. Since the outbreak of fighting in north-east Nigeria in 2009, linked to the Boko Haram insurgency, new explosive threats have emerged in the Lake Chad Basin region, and especially in affected parts of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. Since 2015, the United Nations has undertaken needs assessments and emergency risk education campaigns for at-risk populations in affected areas. At the request of the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Cameroon, and following a technical scoping mission in September 2016, the Mine Action Service deployed personnel to the north of the country in 2017, delivered explosive threat awareness training to humanitarian personnel and assessed the needs for explosive threat mitigation measures in support of humanitarian actors and relevant defence and security forces. Similarly, in March 2017, at the request of the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, a mission assessed explosive threats and their impact in the three Nigerian states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. The scoping team confirmed the presence of explosive threats, including explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices.

38. United Nations support to Colombia contributed to a significant reduction in the number of victims of landmines and explosive remnants of war during the reporting period. In 2014, Colombia had the second highest number of casualties in the world; in 2015 it had fallen to sixth place in this ranking[16] and the data collected by the Government for 2016 and 2017 so far indicate that the downward trend has continued.

[16] According to *Landmine Monitor 2016* (see note 7 above), based on data provided by the national mine action authority of Colombia (Dirección para la Acción Integral contra Minas Antipersonal).

39. During the reporting period, the United Nations expanded mine action activities in Cyprus under the auspices of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. Five high-priority minefields were cleared as part of a package of confidence-building measures between the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. The operations helped build trust at an important moment in the quest for a settlement. Demining operations in seven additional locations facilitate safe access for peacekeepers, members of the Committee on Missing Persons and local communities, and have paved the way for the future opening of two crossing points in the buffer zone which will remove long-standing physical barriers between communities.

40. In Darfur the Mine Action Service conducted assessments in 315 villages, destroyed over 12,000 explosive remnants of war and delivered mine risk education to more than 360,000 individuals in the reporting period. The positive outcome of this work is visible in 24 villages in Northern Darfur State, where approximately 12,000 internally displaced people and refugees prioritized by humanitarian actors for voluntary resettlement have safely returned.

41. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations destroyed approximately 70 landmines and more than 50,000 other explosive remnants of war, allowing local communities to access their land and contributing to their socioeconomic development. Furthermore, mine risk education was delivered to almost 14,000 women, men, girls and boys in the country. Over 5.7 million people were reached through risk awareness campaigns nationwide using text messaging and local language radio.

42. In Eritrea, through community and school-based mine risk education, over 125,000 children in affected areas were taught how to reduce their exposure to the risks posed by landmines and explosive remnants of war. Evaluations demonstrated improved understanding and knowledge among those who participated in the programme.

43. Since April 2016, the United Nations has played a vital role in facilitating the Government of Iraq's stabilization efforts within urban areas liberated from Daesh that are severely contaminated by improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war. Explosive threat mitigation is critical for the safety of the Iraqi population returning to newly liberated areas and is an essential precursor to humanitarian assistance and stabilization. The Mine Action Service is rendering safe key infrastructure, including highways and bridges, water stations and sewage plants and health and education facilities in Ramadi, Fallujah and Mosul to allow civilians to return to their homes. Recent assessments at more than 270 electricity grid sites and water treatment plants allowed water and electricity to be reinstated in eastern and western Mosul. As part of the humanitarian response in Mosul, the Mine Action Service is assessing contamination levels and providing risk education at camps for internally displaced people. More than 70 United Nations inter-agency missions conducted in eastern and western Mosul have benefitted from assessments carried out by the Mine Action Service, enabling the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance.

44. In Libya, despite the volatile situation and the challenge of remote management of programmes from Tunisia, the United Nations has found innovative ways to fulfil its mandate to coordinate risk education, survey and clearance activities and provide technical advice to national authorities. In Sirte, clearance of Bin Sena Hospital enabled the facility to regain full operational capability and clearance along 200 kilometres of gas pipeline re-established access to a vital energy source. Over 120,000 people, including more than 5,500 internally displaced people, received risk education by means of television, radio and "in-person"

sessions. In addition, UNICEF supported mine risk education through a prevention campaign that reached approximately 560,000 children.

45. In Gaza, the United Nations neutralized and destroyed 149 aircraft bombs with an explosive value of 29 tons, preventing accidents and the harvesting of explosives for criminal use. In support of rubble removal and reconstruction activities, 650 risk assessments alongside on-site safety training and oversight enabled the removal of 1 million tons of rubble from heavily contaminated areas without a single accident. Furthermore, the United Nations cleared 136 sites highly likely to be contaminated by deeply buried bombs. Each site required meticulous excavation work followed by the neutralization of complex explosive systems by bomb disposal experts working up to 12 metres below the ground. In 2016, mine action interventions allowed 92 reconstruction projects, worth US$ 57 million, to proceed safely without delays resulting from suspected contamination, thereby supporting sustainable development efforts.

46. In South Sudan, the United Nations rendered more than 3,200 suspected hazardous areas safe, destroying 1,245 anti-personnel mines, 300 anti-tank mines and almost 50,000 explosive remnants of war and enabling access to 270 schools, 40 medical facilities and 225 water points and boreholes. After embedding community liaison officers within mine action teams, in 2016 the programme achieved the highest rate of clearance in South Sudan to date.

47. In Yemen, in 2016, 550 mine action staff funded by UNDP destroyed more than 260,000 explosive remnants of war and rendered safe 3 square kilometres of land throughout nine governorates. The same year, together with the Ministry of Education and the Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre, UNDP signed an action plan to build the capacity of school teachers to deliver risk education in schools. In addition, UNICEF provided risk education to almost 1 million children and 300,000 other community members in 14 governorates.

48. Since 2015, the Mine Action Service has coordinated the mine action component of the United Nations "Whole of Syria" humanitarian response from Gaziantep, Turkey. In line with Security Council resolution 2332 (2016), the Service carries out activities remotely through partners. A mine action sub-cluster has been established, common practices have been developed among an increasing number of partners and mine action has been integrated into the wider humanitarian response. In partnership with the International Organization for Migration, the Mine Action Service conducted an assessment of the impact of mine and explosive remnants of war contamination in 99 per cent of Syrian communities. Findings will inform clearance priorities across the Syrian Arab Republic once access allows. The United Nations has also pre-positioned risk education materials to protect internally displaced people in areas of the country most heavily impacted by conflict and, through the mine action sub-cluster, provided almost 3 million people with risk education through house-to-house sessions and in schools, community centres, internally displaced people camps.

49. The number of children reached by mine risk education in the Syrian Arab Republic more than doubled in 2016 to 1.8 million. UNICEF built the capacity of multiple service providers to scale up interventions to mitigate the increasing risk of exposure to explosive remnants of war contamination. Over 1,000 teachers in 11 governorates and more than 1,200 community members were taught how to deliver mine risk education which was subsequently rolled out to other professionals, maximizing the outreach to children in and beyond schools. A social media campaign on explosive remnants of war risks with a potential audience reach of over 1.6 million people was also delivered.

50. In Sri Lanka, more than 250,000 women, girls, boys and men received risk education in the reporting period. Following this campaign, there was a 15 per cent increase in the reporting of explosive devices by community members and a 20 per cent reduction in accidents involving mines and other explosive remnants of war compared to 2015.

51. In Ukraine, over 600,000 children and adults were reached with risk education in Donetsk and Luhansk regions through a multipronged approach which included learning sessions, capacity-building of educators, media campaigns and a public service announcement by UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Orlando Bloom.

Strategic objective 2: Comprehensive support is provided by national and international actors to mine and explosive remnants of war victims within broader responses to injury and disability

52. It is essential to remember the specific needs and requirements of the thousands of survivors who face enormous challenges, often in difficult conflict and post-conflict situations. Recognizing the link between victim assistance and economic recovery, the United Nations is carrying out activities ranging from immediate emergency interventions to sustainable development initiatives and in this way helps victims regain their dignity, earn incomes and continue contributing to their societies.

53. It is encouraging to see more and more survivors playing an active role in mine action programmes and to note the important part they play in implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the global and local levels. In Mali, victims of explosive incidents and persons with disabilities, half of whom were women, were trained to deliver risk education in their communities. In Afghanistan the United Nations provides three disability advisers, some of whom have disabilities, to the Ministries of Public Health, Education and Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled, as well as the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Agency to assist in implementation of national programmes and to promote adherence to relevant international instruments.

54. According to the latest data,[17] 71 per cent of countries and territories where the United Nations has mine action programming have established national disability policies. Of those, 65 per cent either specifically mention victims of mines and explosive remnants of war or extend equal rights to all people with disabilities regardless of the source and type of disability. Furthermore, 85 per cent of countries provide at least one form of victim assistance and 40 per cent provide the full range of services. During the reporting period, the United Nations extended victim assistance programming to an additional five countries.

55. Upon request, the United Nations provides technical support to national authorities. In South Sudan, the United Nations helped the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare to develop a national policy for persons with disabilities; in Sri Lanka, the Ministry of Health received support in developing a new system to capture data on injuries and strengthen treatment referral processes.

56. Partnerships are an important element of effective victim assistance programmes. In Cambodia, 450 child survivors received community-based rehabilitation assistance, including medical treatment, vocational training and school reintegration support through the United Nations in partnership with accredited community-based organizations. In Eritrea, in partnership with the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare and the Ministry of Education, the United

[17] According to data collected by the monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018, reflecting the situation at the end of December 2016.

Nations helped almost 200 children with disabilities (47 per cent female), including landmine and explosive remnant of war survivors, to access education through an initiative that provides donkeys for transportation to school. In Myanmar, the United Nations expanded victim assistance activities by opening a victim assistance centre in Kayin State in partnership with Handicap International and the Myanmar Physical Disability Association , which enabled, for the first time, implementation of risk education and victim assistance activities in Kayin.

57. In Afghanistan, through the Mine Action Service, over 86,000 people affected by mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices received food and non-food assistance, and almost 11,000 received psychosocial counselling. The United Nations also supports fixed and mobile rehabilitation centres in remote areas to enable access to physical rehabilitation and prosthetics. Almost 25,000 people were provided with such services, and 40,000 people received disability awareness and advocacy training.

58. In Yemen, the United Nations worked to improve the efficiency and speed with which victims are supported; 155 injured children, including mine and explosive remnant of war survivors, received medical services, including surgery and physical rehabilitation.

59. In 2016, UNICEF launched guidance on child-focused victim assistance, designed to ensure that programmes engaged with child victims of landmines and explosive remnants of war provide the support required for the children's physical and psychological well-being.

Strategic objective 3: The transfer of mine action functions to national actors is accelerated, with national capacity to fulfil mine action responsibilities increased

60. I am pleased to report a continued increase in the national ownership of mine action. Data from the United Nations monitoring and evaluation mechanism shows that mine action functions have been transferred to national actors in 43 per cent of the countries and territories where the United Nations has mine action programming. These countries include Afghanistan, Colombia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

61. In Afghanistan, where full transfer of all mine action functions is planned for the end of 2018, handover efforts have been supported by increased South-South cooperation, benefitting all parties. Personnel from the mine action centres in Afghanistan, the Sudan, Tajikistan and Turkey have exchanged best practices and lessons learned, covering technical, practical and administrative aspects of mine action management.

62. In Colombia, the United Nations has continued to strengthen the national capacity to fulfil mine action responsibilities, particularly through the National Mine Action Authority, in which United Nations national advisers are embedded, as well as through civilian demining organizations. During the reporting period, the United Nations helped establish instruments to coordinate and regulate the humanitarian demining sector. This is particularly important given the anticipated expansion in demining in connection with the ongoing peace process and Colombia's push to clear all known anti-personnel landmine contamination by 2021. United Nations efforts to develop civilian demining capacities led to the number of accredited civilian demining organizations increasing from one to seven during the reporting period, including two Colombian organizations.

63. In Iraq, the United Nations provides technical advice and guidance to national and regional mine action authorities to enhance their coordination of explosive threat mitigation. Since March 2016, over 60 police officers and regional mine

action officials have completed improvised explosive device threat mitigation training, directly supporting the development of a national capacity able to respond to explosive threats safely and with confidence in areas retaken from Daesh.

64. In Libya, the United Nations developed the capacity of almost 200 nationals in all aspects of mine action. Since August 2015, 30 national officers from eastern Libya have been trained to undertake mine and explosive remnants of war assessments, and 18 of those assessments have been carried out in Benghazi. The United Nations assisted the national authority in developing Libyan mine action standards, assisted with accreditation procedures and coordinated consultations with Libyan authorities for the provision of equipment and technical support to respond to the threat of explosive ordnance and improvised explosive devices in post-liberation Sirte.

65. The Mine Action Service, integrated into the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, developed a national explosive ordnance response capacity following the establishment of a national explosive ordnance disposal coordination centre. United Nations technical assistance included the development of pre-deployment training materials for Malian explosive threat mitigation teams.

66. In Myanmar, the mine risk working group is co-chaired by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and the United Nations and includes 10 ministries and 41 international and national organizations. The group fosters common strategies and delivery of the inter-agency/interministerial work plan. Thanks to successful advocacy, non-governmental demining organizations are now authorized to conduct non-technical surveys in specific townships in Kayah and Kayin States, where a coordination group has been formed to address emergency needs for internally displaced people and other-conflict affected communities. This shows how steady progress at the local level can provide an important foundation for future nationwide efforts.

67. In Somalia, where there is an increasing threat from improvised explosive devices, the United Nations enhances improvised explosive device disposal capabilities of the Somali police. Awareness sessions were delivered to more than 800 newly recruited police personnel in Baidoa and Kismayo, enabling them to recognize and appropriately react to improvised explosive devices. The Somali police have safely destroyed over 1,600 explosive remnants of war and responded to more than 80 improvised explosive device incidents in the reporting period.

68. Furthermore, I am pleased to note the Somali Explosive Management Authority's progress towards being established as a formal entity within the Ministry of Internal Security, following the approval of its legal instruments by the Council of Ministers and the Federal Parliament in October 2015. During the reporting period, the national authority launched the Badbaado Plan, a country-wide plan for clearance and management of mines and explosive remnants of war.

Strategic objective 4: Mine action is promoted and integrated in multilateral instruments and frameworks as well as national plans and legislation

69. The development of plans and strategies to implement multinational frameworks related to mine action is a crucial aspect of United Nations work in a number of countries. In Bosnia and Herzegovina and Cambodia, UNDP assisted in the development of new national strategies which align local conditions with the Maputo Action Plan and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Furthermore, in Tajikistan, UNDP assisted the national authority in developing a national mine action law which was approved by the Government in July 2016. The associated national mine action strategy and national mine action standards have been submitted for Government approval. I look forward to their coming into force.

70. In Iraq, the Mine Action Service provided technical expertise for the development of the national mine action strategic plan 2017-2021 and assisted the Government in formulating its extension request for article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. I attach great importance to compliance with international humanitarian law and reiterate the commitment of the United Nations to supporting States in this regard.

71. In Somalia, mine action has been integrated into the first national development plan 2017-2019 developed by the Federal Government. This plan supports the State formation process together with the development agenda and builds on the foundation established by the New Deal Compact. Advocacy by the United Nations in South Sudan resulted in mine action being included in the Interim Cooperation Framework, as well as humanitarian response plans.

72. In November 2016, the Government of Colombia and the country's largest non-State armed group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia — People's Army (FARC-EP), ratified a peace accord in which a major, cross-cutting role for mine action is defined. Ex-combatants will be trained as deminers in reintegration and reparations processes agreed to under transitional justice procedures. The future restitution of contaminated land constitutes a key component of efforts to stimulate sustainable development and sustain peace. In coordination with the Colombian national emergency education board, the United Nations strengthened the capacity of 55 Colombian officials from education secretariats, more than half the national total, to develop emergency education plans that include mine risk education strategies. Developments in Colombia outlined here and throughout my report provide an excellent example of how mine action strengthens peacebuilding, humanitarian response and development initiatives through strong and effective partnerships, and I encourage replication where appropriate.

73. Similarly, in Myanmar, as a result of advocacy carried out by regional mine action coordination groups and supported by the United Nations, there is an increasing recognition that mine action can help foster dialogue and peacebuilding. The ceasefire signed in October 2015 included demining, and in 2016, the new democratically elected government included mine risk education in its 100-day plan, which enabled access to Kayin State for the first time to implement risk education and victim assistance activities.

IV. Progress in strengthening United Nations mine action capacity

74. In addition to the strategic objectives reported on above, the United Nations has committed itself to a number of initiatives to strengthen its assistance in mine action.

75. Throughout the reporting period, the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action strengthened the coherence of United Nations activity through active monitoring of emerging conflicts and coordination of efforts to mainstream mine action into the broader sectors of humanitarian response and sustainable development, particularly as outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

76. I am pleased to note the achievements of the Mine Action Service, lead agency of the mine action area of responsibility within the Global Protection Cluster, in mainstreaming mine action in humanitarian responses, making full use of existing coordination mechanisms at the country level. As a reflection of these efforts, mine action is identified as a strategic priority of the protection cluster in the

humanitarian response plans for Afghanistan, Mali, South Sudan and the Sudan, ensuring operational effectiveness in emergency situations. A mine action sub-cluster has been established in the "Whole of Syria" response, while in Iraq a coordination mechanism has been created to reinforce national capacities for mitigating explosive risks. At the global level, mine action has been included in various humanitarian policy documents, such as the Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action adopted by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in 2016, in recognition of the important role mine action plays in protection.

77. The United Nations policy on victim assistance was updated and promulgated in 2016, with increased emphasis on and integration of victim assistance efforts into broader national frameworks and provision of sustained services and support to victims, including victims of improvised explosive devices. Steady progress is also continuing towards consistent application of the United Nations gender guidelines, specifically in the areas of programme design and equal employment opportunities. An update of these guidelines is currently under way.

78. I welcome the memorandum of understanding between the African Union and the Mine Action Service, which institutionalizes cooperation, most notably on the implementation of the African Union Mine Action and Explosive Remnants of War Strategic Framework 2014-2017.

79. There was also progress in promoting compliance with the International Mine Action Standards and implementation of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines. The International Mine Action Standards Review Board, chaired by the Mine Action Service, met regularly to ensure that standards were reviewed and updated in line with emerging threats and methodologies. New draft standards were developed on animal detection systems, environmental management and quality management. Moreover, in October 2016, a subcommittee of the Review Board recommended that separate and complementary standards outside the International Mine Action Standards be elaborated to address disposal of improvised explosive devices which are not considered victim-activated landmines. Following the 2015 update of the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, the United Nations SaferGuard programme continued to oversee their dissemination for the safe and secure management of ammunition. The SaferGuard programme, established as a management platform for conventional ammunition in the United Nations, continued to engage relevant technical experts in the maintenance and improvement of the Guidelines in view of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular goal 16.4 involving illicit arms flows.

80. Given the rising prevalence and humanitarian impact of improvised explosive devices, I am encouraged that, in response to recommendations in my report on countering the threat posed by improvised explosive devices (A/71/187), the Mine Action Service coordinated the elaboration of the United Nations improvised explosive device disposal standards with 12 Member States. Filling a critical gap, these standards will provide minimum capabilities for the safe disposal of these indiscriminate weapons. In addition, to support development of a coherent whole-of-system United Nations response to improvised explosive devices, the Service is undertaking a review of roles and resources within the system to address the problem.

81. I encourage development of a global mechanism to facilitate increased collaboration and the voluntary sharing of information concerning improvised explosive devices among Member States, United Nations entities and relevant global and regional institutions.

82. Furthermore, the United Nations provided impartial and authoritative information on improvised explosive device threat mitigation through online

portals, informal consultations and awareness raising, including by developing guidelines for threat mitigation in mission settings. To provide the United Nations system with a conceptual framework and operational vocabulary, in 2016 the Mine Action Service published an improvised explosive device lexicon to assist in standardizing terminology and developing policy and doctrine.

83. In keeping with the commitment to improve the skills of United Nations mine action staff, the Mine Action Service implemented 10 courses on mine action operations, quality management and leadership for seven national mine action authorities and 150 staff to enhance operational effectiveness and coordination skills. Furthermore, training in portfolio, programme and project management was provided to 170 United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) mine action personnel to improve their capacity for effective mine action project delivery. Cognizant of the increasingly asymmetric threat environments in which mine action entities operate, the Mine Action Service, in close cooperation with the Department of Safety and Security of the Secretariat, organized and implemented numerous emergency trauma bag courses, security certification programmes and courses in security analysis and hostage incident management to improve the safety of United National personnel working in conflict-affected contexts.

84. In 2016, UNICEF, together with the Mine Action Service and civil society partners, organized an integrated mine action programming course to promote collaboration among mine action specializations, avoid "stove-piping" and deliver better results. This course will be offered again in 2017.

85. To strengthen resource management, the Mine Action Service transitioned from using a multiple resource planning system to an integrated one, part of the of the Secretariat's transition to the Umoja system. This will enhance the ability of the Service to report to donors in a timely manner. Furthermore UNOPS, the main implementing partner of the Mine Action Service, reports on the utilization of donor resources through the International Aid and Transparency Initiative, which provides excellent visibility of funds provided to the Service and channelled to UNOPS.

86. The Mine Action Service strengthened its donor relations and resource mobilization unit in order to enhance the capacity to respond to the high level of donor requests, ensure full compliance with legal arrangements and pursue new resources. The Service's resource mobilization strategy ensures that mandated functions and programmes are fully and sustainably resourced with a sufficient capacity at Headquarters to backstop programmes, manage project oversight and deliver technical and policy guidance. The Service is also participating in the roll out of the system-wide programmatic reporting dashboard, which will soon provide donors with online access to narrative and financial reporting from the United Nations.

87. In 2016 and 2017, on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, the Mine Action Service coordinated and oversaw the annual process of creating and publishing the Mine Action Project Portfolio. The Portfolio for 2017 presents the mine action needs of 23 affected countries and territories. Portfolio coordinators at the field level were responsible for working with national authorities, the United Nations and mine action partners to develop and agree upon a national mine action strategy and relevant project proposals. Senior Headquarters staff from UNDP, UNICEF and the Mine Action Service reviewed and approved each country portfolio prior to publication.

88. Daniel Craig, the Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and Explosive Hazards, continued to raise global awareness of mine action activities, including through personal appearances, video messages and participation in the opening session of the World Humanitarian Summit.

V. Observations and recommendations

89. In order to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development we have to redouble our efforts to reach those left behind, including refugees, internally displaced people, children and all others whose lives have been overturned by conflicts. All people should have access to humanitarian assistance and protection in time of need and have the opportunity to thrive. Mine action is an integral part of the work of the United Nations in achieving these goals.

90. The nature of today's crises requires a strengthened nexus between peace and security, humanitarian assistance, sustainable development and human rights. In this regard, I welcome the Security Council's first resolution on mine action, resolution 2365 (2017), which stresses the importance of considering mine action in the earliest stages of planning and programming in peacekeeping operations and special political missions, as well as in humanitarian responses.

91. I take note of the work of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, which has guided the response to the increasingly challenging environment in which the United Nations operates. The Group has delivered tangible and measurable results in its implementation of the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018, including on gender mainstreaming. The availability of relevant data is essential to credible evidence-based decision-making, and the United Nations remains committed to full and thorough monitoring and evaluation of mine action activities to support its implementation of the Strategy. In my next report, I look forward to presenting the final assessment of and lessons learned from the 2013-2018 and introducing the next strategy, which will draw on evidence-based conclusions from the present one.

92. I am encouraged by the reduction of deaths and injuries caused by anti-personnel landmines; however, I register with concern the significant increase in casualties caused by explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices. I welcome the efforts of the United Nations to mitigate the threat posed by these weapons, including through clearance, awareness-raising, elaboration of disposal standards, guidance and training to strengthen the capacity of the Organization to mitigate these threats and their humanitarian impact. I call upon all Member States in a position to do so, affected countries and donors alike, to provide the necessary resources, including to the Mine Action Service, to support the coordination of a coherent and effective United Nations response.

93. Our approach to peace and security has been dominated by responding to conflict. In future, to increase the effectiveness of interventions, we need to do far more to prevent war and sustain peace. In that context, I call upon Member States to prevent unnecessary harm and suffering by ratifying, acceding to and fully implementing the legal instruments of international humanitarian and human rights law, and by increasing their efforts to comply with their international obligations.

94. Mine action has proven to be a valuable stabilization tool and has shown its worth as a confidence-building measure in the negotiation of ceasefires and peace agreements. I call upon Member States and other stakeholders to actively seek opportunities for the incorporation of mine action in political settlements. Working with Member States, the United Nations will seek to ensure that mine action is integrated into stabilization efforts, peace operations mandates and humanitarian response plans in countries and territories where landmines, explosive remnants of war, cluster munitions or improvised explosive devices pose a threat to women, girls, boys and men.

95. The United Nations continues to strive for a world free of the threat of mines, explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions, and improvised explosive devices. To take that work forward, I call upon Member States to provide multi-year, unearmarked funding for humanitarian mine action, including the coordination required for effective global efforts. Furthermore, I urge Member States and other parties to take all feasible measures to protect civilian populations, including children, from mines and explosive remnants of war.

96. I conclude by paying tribute to all those who have lost their lives in the line of duty and commend the women and men working tirelessly, often in highly insecure environments. I am both proud of and humbled by their dedication to achieving the United Nations vision of a world free from the threat of landmines and other explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions, where individuals and communities can live in a safe environment conducive to development and where the needs of victims of mines and explosive remnants of war are met and survivors are fully integrated as equal members of their societies.

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Promotion and protection of human rights: implementation of human rights instrument

Situation of women and girls with disabilities and the Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/145, provides an overview of the situation of women and girls with disabilities and presents the ongoing efforts and progress made by Governments, the entities of the United Nations system and civil society organizations in advancing the rights and status of women and girls with disabilities. The report also provides an update on the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto. It concludes with recommendations for the further inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in the implementation of the Convention and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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I. Introduction

1. Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognizes that women and girls with disabilities face multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination In the preamble to the Convention attention is drawn to the particular susceptibility of women and girls with disabilities to violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation. Mindful of these particular challenges, the General Assembly, in its resolution 70/145, requested the Secretary-General to submit, at its seventy-second session, a report on the situation of women and girls with disabilities, including a segment on the status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto (see annex). In the same resolution, the Assembly also acknowledged the contributions of other international frameworks, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, towards the fulfilment and mainstreaming of the rights of persons with disabilities and emphasized the importance of mainstreaming disability issues as an integral part of relevant sustainable development strategies.

2. Pursuant to resolution 70/145, the present report provides an overview of the situation of women and girls with disabilities, in line with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and with a view to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It provides an outlines the international norms and standards that guide national efforts to advance the status of women and girl, and of persons with disabilities, noting the strengths and weaknesses of these frameworks in ensuring that attention is paid to the specific challenges of women and girls with disabilities. With regard to the intersecting priorities of the frameworks, the report draws on the research available to explore briefly the situation of women and girls with disabilities in the areas of inclusion and accessibility, education, decent work, employment and social protection, the right to sexual and reproductive health, violence against women and girls with disabilities, and data and statistics. Based on inputs from Member States, United Nations entities and civil society organizations,[1] the report also provides insights into the initiatives and activities being undertaken to address the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities in these key areas, at national and international levels, as well as general efforts to ensure the full participation and empowerment of women and girls with disabilities as agents of development. The report concludes with recommendations for action for the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in the implementation of the Convention and of the 2030 Agenda.

[1] In response to a note verbale sent by the Secretariat, inputs were received from 30 Member States: Australia, Burundi, Cambodia, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czechia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Greece, Jordan, Kenya, Lithuania, Mexico, Mongolia, Qatar, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Spain, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and United States of America; nine United Nations entities: the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV) and the World Health Organization (WHO); and nine civil society organizations: Everyday Psych Victims Project, International Disability Alliance, Making It Work, Recovery Experts by Experience, Researchers Philanthropy, Sightsavers, Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Persons With Disabilities and their Families (RIADIS), World Blind Union, Zero Project.

II. International norms and standards relating to women and girls with disabilities

3. The advancement of the status of women and persons with disabilities is rooted in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and supported by several international instruments, norms and standards on human rights, development, disability, gender and, more recently, peace and security. Relevant instruments include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol.

4. The particular needs and roles of women with disabilities were addressed explicitly by the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, adopted in 1982, which recognized women with disabilities as a special group and addressed the specific barriers they face in accessing health care, education and employment. The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the General Assembly in 1993, also called for particular attention to be paid to women in achieving equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted in 1995, also identified specific actions that Governments should take to ensure the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities in various areas, bringing disability inclusion into the general efforts to address the multiple barriers to empowerment and advancement faced by women and girls. Building on those previous commitments, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognized the multiple forms of discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities, committing States parties to taking measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by them of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

5. Other regional and international frameworks have also acknowledged the importance of including women and girls with disabilities in both the drafting and implementation processes.

6. At the regional level, the European Union signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2014) in 2017, in which the parties are urged to take measures to protect the rights of victims, including persons with disabilities. In 2012, Governments in the Asia and Pacific region adopted the Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, and the Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for persons with disabilities, with one of the 10 goals dedicated to ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment. The Organization of American States adopted the Program of Action for the Decade of the Americas for the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities (2006-2016), which includes specific references to women and girls with disabilities, in line with the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities.

7. At the international level, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 emphasizes the importance of disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction, calling for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards on disaster risk reduction, and for promoting the leadership of women and youth in the process.

8. The international community has also addressed the urgency of inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in humanitarian action. The commitments made at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 included the achievement of gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls, and disability inclusion in humanitarian action. The Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (2016), endorsed by Member States, United Nations agencies and a number of human rights networks and organizations, made specific reference to women and girls with disabilities and called for their empowerment and protection from physical, sexual and other forms of violence in the context of humanitarian emergencies.

9. In addition, Member States made references to women and girls with disabilities in international agreements concerning countries facing specific challenges, referred to as the most vulnerable countries, in pursuit of sustainable development.[2] While most outcome documents on countries in special situations address gender equality and women's empowerment, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 makes specific references to access to water and sanitation services and the equal rights of women with disabilities. In the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway (2014), recognizing the multiplier effect on sustainable development of women's empowerment and the full realization of human rights for women and girls, the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States highlighted the importance of tackling the structural and socioeconomic inequalities and multiple intersecting forms of discrimination that affect women and girls, including those with disabilities, that hinder progress and development. Commitments to women and girls with disabilities in the Pathway included support to providing high-quality education and training and disaggregation of data by sex, age and disability.

10. Many international and regional norms focus only on persons with disabilities, implicitly covering women and girls with disabilities but without recognizing the specific challenges faced by them. For example, in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, adopted in 2015, the participants committed to providing social protection and access to education, employment and technologies for persons with disabilities. The New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in 2016, pledges to eliminate discrimination, provide equal access to technology, employment and public services, including transport infrastructure, for persons with disabilities, and ensure their participation in decision-making processes in urban planning.

11. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the international community also made an implicit commitment to the empowerment and advancement of women and girls with disabilities. On the principle of "leaving no one behind", the 2030 Agenda explicitly recognizes gender equality and disability as cross-cutting issues. In addition to a stand-alone goal to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Sustainable Development Goal 5), the 2030 Agenda requires the systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in its implementation. While disability is not addressed in a stand-alone goal, it is specifically included in the Goals related to education, growth and employment, inequality, accessibility of human settlements, and data, monitoring and accountability. In addition, persons with disabilities are recognized among those vulnerable groups for whom progress must be particularly monitored, as Member States aim to achieve universal goals concerning basic needs, including the

[2] See General Assembly resolution 70/1, para. 22.

eradication of poverty and hunger, ensuring healthy lives and well-being, and securing access to clean water and sanitation for all.

12. The international frameworks outlined in the present report all provide exceptional opportunities to advance the situation of women and girls with disabilities.

III. Situation of women and girls with disabilities

13. The prevalence of disabilities among women is higher than in men. While only 12 per cent of men have a disability, for women that is estimated at 19 per cent.[3] As of 2015, women and girls with disabilities were expected to reach 700 million globally.[4] The higher rate among women is partially attributable to a mix of factors, including women's longer life expectancy, the later onset of dementia[5] and the impact of poor maternal health care, particularly in developing countries.[6] The relationship between old age and the prevalence of women with disabilities is a critical factor, given the current global trend of ageing populations and the fact that the population of women in the older age group outnumbers men in all regions, constituting 54 per cent of those aged 60 and over and 62 per cent of those aged 80 and over in 2015.[5]

Inclusion and accessibility

14. Equal access to social welfare, education and employment are fundamental for the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities, their participation in decision-making processes and leadership roles in society and development. However, the multiple forms of discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities continue to pose a challenge to their full inclusion in society. Women and girls with disabilities have limited access to education, employment, adequate housing and health care (see A/70/297, para. 38). They also face denial of political, economic and social rights owing to persistent cultural, legal, physical and institutional barriers. They are also likely to be excluded or neglected in policy and decision-making processes. Accessibility is a precondition for full and effective participation of persons with disabilities.[7] For women and girls with disabilities, accessibility plays a pivotal role in seizing an opportunity to access basic services, including food, water and sanitation, health care, education, transport and information. In that regard, information and communications technology is an essential tool for creating enabling conditions for women and girls with disabilities.

Education

15. Girls with disabilities are less likely to complete primary school and more likely to be marginalized or denied access to education. Only 41.7 per cent of girls with disabilities complete primary school, compared to 50.6 per cent of men and boys with disabilities and 52.9 per cent of women and girls without disabilities.[3] Likewise, women and girls with disabilities receive on average 4.98 years of

[3] WHO and World Bank, *World Report on Disability* (Geneva, WHO, 2011), 28.

[4] Estimate based on two reports: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "World population prospects: 2017 revision", in which it is estimated that the global female population is approximately 3.6 billion, and *The World Report on Disability*.

[5] See United Nations Statistics Division, *The World's Women 2015: Trends and Statistics* (New York, 2015).

[6] See Lori Ashford, "Hidden suffering: disabilities from pregnancy and childbirth in less developed countries", Population Reference Bureau, 2002.

[7] See General Assembly resolution 48/96 and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, art. 9.

education, compared to 5.96 years for men and boys with disabilities and 6.26 years for women and girls without disabilities.[3] Educational disadvantage among women and girls with disabilities could lead to higher risk of social exclusion and poverty and could have long-term implications for their capacity and opportunity to participate in labour markets.

Decent work, employment and social protection

16. Women with disabilities have a 19.6 per cent employment rate, compared with 52.8 per cent for men with disabilities and 29.9 per cent for women without disabilities.[8] Many women and girls with disabilities engage in domestic activities that typically do not generate monetary incomes and are therefore at considerably higher risk of living in poverty. This relegation to the domestic sphere is often linked to stigma associated with disability.[9]

17. Women with disabilities often experience inequality at workplaces as regards hiring and promotion standards and access to training and retraining. For those women with disabilities who pursue self-employment, the lack of access to credit and other productive resources, has remained a common challenge.[10]

18. Social assistance benefits can have positive effects on employment for persons with disabilities.[3] However, in 2016 only 28 per cent of women and men with severe disabilities collected disability benefits.[11]

Right to sexual and reproductive health

19. At the global level, particularly in developing regions, the leading causes of death amongst women are HIV/AIDS and maternal conditions.[5] Women with disabilities of reproductive age (15-49) are at higher risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes than women without disabilities.[12] However, as a result of inaccessibility and stereotyping, women and girls with disabilities are persistently confronted with barriers to sexual and reproductive health services and to information on comprehensive sex education, particularly women and girls with intellectual disabilities.[13]

20. Women with disabilities are also likely to have negative health indicators, such as mental distress, obesity and asthma, and have less emotional support compared to women without disabilities.[12]

Violence against women and girls with disabilities

21. Globally, women are more likely to experience physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence than men, and women and girls with disabilities experience

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[8] Figures based on an analysis of World Health Survey results from 51 countries, see *World Report on Disability*.

[9] See UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 2013: Children with Disabilities* (New York, UNICEF, 2013).

[10] See Arthur O'Reilly, "The Right to decent work of persons with disabilities", International Labour Organization skills working paper No. 14, 2003.

[11] See E/2017/66 and indicator 1.3.1 of the Sustainable Development Goals, available from https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/?indicator=1.3.1.

[12] See M. Mitra and others, "Disparities in adverse preconception risk factors between women with and without disabilities," *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, vol. 20, No. 3 (March 2016).

[13] See Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNFPA and Wellesley Centers for Women, *Disability Rights, Gender, and Development: a Resource Tool for Action* (New York, UNFPA, 2008) and Carolyn Frohmader and Stephanie Ortoleva, "The sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls with disabilities," briefing paper for the ICPD Beyond 2014: International Conference on Human Rights (2013).

gender-based violence at disproportionately higher rates and in unique forms owing to discrimination and stigma based on both gender and disability.[14] For instance, women and girls with disabilities experience domestic violence at twice the rate of other women and they also experience forms of violence specifically because of their disability, including isolation, violence in institutions and the withholding of medication and mobility, vision and hearing aids.[15] In particular, women and girls with disabilities are more likely to be subjected to forced medical treatment and reproductive health procedures without their consent.[16]

22. The threat of violence is particularly high in conflict areas. Women and girls constitute almost half the global refugee population and are at high risk of various forms of violence and exploitation, such as sexual abuse, forced impregnation, forced abortion and trafficking.[5] Owing to the inaccessibility of refugee camps, women with disabilities are often confined to their shelters and their voices go unheard in reconciliation activities.[16]

Data and statistics

23. Data disaggregation by disability, sex, and age is indispensable for understanding the situation of women and girls with disabilities and informing policies to ensure their social inclusion and human rights. However, such data remains scarce. An increasing number of countries are collecting data on persons with disability, however the data are often not disaggregated by sex and age. Lack of reliable and high-quality data is a major obstacle impeding greater progress in policies and programmes for women and girls with disabilities. Moreover, data collected on persons with disabilities by countries are not always comparable owing to the use of different methodologies for collection.[17] For many of the Sustainable Development Goal indicators of relevance for women and girls with disabilities, no internationally established methodology or standards are yet available, thus preventing the collection and availability of data. For example, that is the case for indicator 11.7.2, which measures physical and sexual harassment by sex and disability.

IV. Initiatives and activities undertaken in advancing the rights and status of women and girls with disabilities

A. Member States

24. Initiatives and activities of Member States for the empowerment and advancement of women and girls with disabilities have been concentrated in the areas of legislative frameworks; partnerships, cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination; and addressing issues of accessibility, social protection, habilitation and rehabilitation, education, work and employment, health care, the right to sexual and reproductive health, violence, and data and statistics. The present section summarizes the inputs received from Member States in that regard.

[14] See UNFPA, *Addressing Violence against Women and Girls in Sexual and Reproductive Services: a Review of Knowledge Assets* (New York, UNFPA, 2010) and Stephanie Ortoleva and Hope Lewis, *Forgotten Sisters — a Report on Violence against Women and Disabilities: an Overview of its Nature, Scope, Causes and Consequences*, Northeastern University School of Law Research Paper No. 104-2012 (2012).

[15] Stephanie Ortoleva and Hope Lewis, *Forgotten Sisters — a Report on Violence against Women and Disabilities*.

[16] See Carolyn Frohmader and Stephanie Ortoleva, "The sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls with disabilities".

[17] UN-Women issue brief, "Making the SDGs count for women and girls with disabilities" (2017).

Legislative frameworks

25. Many Member States reported the formulation of laws and regulations to promote and protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities. Since 2009, Cambodia has developed the Law on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, while the Ministry of Women's Affairs has conducted awareness-raising workshops on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls, and training on mainstreaming gender and disability into policy development. The law in Jordan stipulated that the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities should form a committee to serve as an advisory and implementing body on all issues relating to women with disabilities. China passed a Law on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women (1992, amended in 2005), to ensure the completion of compulsory education for girls with disabilities and to prohibit the mistreatment or abandonment of women with disabilities. It also passed a Law on the Protection of Minors (1991) to protect women and persons with disabilities from being discriminated against or mistreated by their families. In Mongolia, the Law on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities (2005) was revised in 2016. Also in 2016, Kenya passed the bill on persons with disabilities. Turkey established a Disability Act (2005) which incorporates measures to combat discrimination and gender equality.

26. Some Member States have reported that they guarantee the protection of the rights of women and girls with disabilities through anti-discrimination laws. In Switzerland, the Equality for the Disabled Act stipulates that the Confederation and the cantons must take account of the specific needs of women with disabilities, including the elimination of double discrimination. Under the Constitution in Qatar, all Qataris are considered equal in their rights and obligations, and persons with disabilities receive the same services as non-disabled citizens without any discrimination.

National action plans and programmes

27. A significant number of Member States reported the integration of women and girls with disabilities into their national plans and strategies focused on disability, with many of them in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Australia, Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Czechia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Kenya, Lithuania, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Togo and Tunisia have developed national strategies and action plans on persons with disabilities, with the provision of rights, inclusion and equal opportunities and access for women and girls with disabilities, taking into account the risk of multiple forms of discrimination.

28. Some Member States reported on the progress in their national strategies for women and girls with disabilities. Ecuador and Senegal are taking specific measures to advance gender equality, through the national agenda for equality of disabilities 2018-2022 in Ecuador and the national disability action plan 2017-2021 in Senegal. Mongolia is currently developing a national programme on protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, including women and girls with disabilities, and supported the participation and engagement of persons with disabilities to accelerate the implementation of the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In the Philippines, the National Council on Disability Affairs develops policies, plans and programmes that address the concerns of women with disabilities. Chile, Cyprus, El Salvador, Greece and Jordan reported on their efforts to promote rights, equal treatment and the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities through their national strategies and actions on gender equality.

29. Czechia, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are promoting the rights and empowerment of women and girls with disabilities and encouraging their participation in society and development through national human rights development strategies and plans. Czechia included provisions on the multiple forms of discrimination faced by women with disabilities in its national plan. In Saudi Arabia, the 10th development plan, 2015-2019, contains a number of objectives and policies aimed at the promotion and protection of human rights, including the rights of women and girls with disabilities. The United Arab Emirates has developed an association for the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities, which was launched in 2011 with the aim of empowering women with disabilities through capacity-building of girls with disabilities.

Accessibility

30. Accessibility, including improving access to information, services, facilities and the built environment, has continued to be a key priority for many Member States in the context of addressing the concerns of women and girls with disabilities. Mexico and Saudi Arabia reported on their work dedicated to improving the accessibility of public spaces and transportation systems for persons with disabilities. Romania also reported on a series of measures taken, with special attention paid to women and girls with disabilities, to increase the access of persons with disabilities to all community facilities and public resources, including social welfare benefits and services.

Social protection

31. Member States recognize the rights of women and girls with disabilities to social protection and have reported on their efforts to improve social protection, in line with the commitment of the 2030 Agenda to leaving no one behind. Australia reported on the national disability insurance scheme, which is delivered in a gender-neutral and sensitive manner. Saudi Arabia and Senegal also reported on their efforts to incorporate the perspectives of children and women in their social welfare programmes targeting persons with disabilities. Ecuador, Mongolia and the Philippines implemented a series of social programmes aimed at promoting the autonomy of persons with disabilities and their reintegration into families, with a focus on women and girls with disabilities.

Habilitation and rehabilitation

32. Several Member States reported on the measures taken to enable women and girls with disabilities to attain and maintain maximum independence through rehabilitation services and programmes. China adopted a regulation on disability prevention and rehabilitation for persons with disabilities in 2017, which provided a legal basis for the development of rehabilitation programmes for persons with disabilities, including women and girls with disabilities. Lithuania is implementing its action plan for 2016-2018, which focuses on the funding of projects on rehabilitation services in the community, projects on independent living and mobility skills training for persons with disabilities and other programmes dedicated to mainstreaming persons with disabilities in society. Senegal also reported on the implementation of a national community-based rehabilitation programme for persons with disabilities. In Saudi Arabia, persons with disabilities have the option of living in rehabilitation housing centres or living with their families, with grants given to their parents/guardians for the provision of care.

Education

33. Member States are making efforts to secure equal opportunities for education for girls with disabilities. China, Peru and Tunisia reported progress in strengthening laws and regulations pertaining to inclusive education, while supporting special education as needed. Burundi reported on its continued efforts to promote inclusive education for children with disabilities, including girls. Mongolia highlighted the implementation of its programme on the equal enrolment in school of children with disabilities (2014-2018), which has contributed to an increase in the investment in technology, equipment and school supplies for improving learning environments and promoting positive attitudes toward persons with disabilities. Kenya reported on its programme for the education of girls with disabilities. Ecuador also reported on its efforts to address sexual violence and the abuse of women and girls with disabilities in educational institutions.

Work and employment

34. A number of Member States reported on their actions to encourage persons with disabilities, especially women with disabilities, to participate in the labour markets. Greece reported on a domestic law that promotes the principle of equal treatment and combating discrimination in employment on grounds of disability, age or sexual orientation. Australia, China, Mongolia and Peru have continued the government programmes that support persons with disabilities in employment. Qatar reported on coordination between government agencies and the private sector to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities through provision of the necessary training.

35. Recognizing the multiple forms of discrimination that women and girls with disabilities face, Costa Rica has included an action in its strategy for the promotion of labour inclusion of persons with disabilities (2016-2021) to promote affirmative action for women with disabilities in training and employment. Peru reported on its efforts to strengthen the utilization of telework, a telecommunication tool that enables the provision of services without the physical presence of the workers, which provides women with mobility disabilities with a suitable mechanism for entering the labour market.

36. Member States also reported on an increase in government funding for the economic empowerment of women and girls with disabilities. In Kenya, 10 per cent of the Government Procurement Opportunities Fund is set aside specifically for women with disabilities. Togo also reported that nearly 500 women with disabilities and mothers of children with disabilities had received microcredits from the contribution of the national funds on inclusive finance and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Right to sexual and reproductive health

37. Member States recognized that women and girls with disabilities experience a higher prevalence of violations of the right to sexual and reproductive health, which exacerbates their health risks. Chile and Costa Rica reported on interministerial cooperation to eliminate the gender gap and promote the right to sexual and reproductive health of women and girls with disabilities. Ecuador participated, as one of the pilot countries, in the global programme for sexual and reproductive health and the prevention of gender-based violence among youth and adolescents with disabilities, entitled "We decide", launched by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Senegal is developing a national strategy for universal health coverage that includes mechanisms to promote the reproductive health of women with disabilities.

Violence against women and girls with disabilities

38. Several Member States reported on their national plans and specific initiatives to address the heightened risk of the exposure to violence and exploitation of women and girls with disabilities. In Australia, the national plan to reduce violence against women and children (2010-2022) identifies, supports and responds to women with disabilities who are experiencing, or are at risk of domestic violence and sexual assault. Burundi, Czechia, Peru and Turkey also reported on their respective national plans that are responsive to victims of abuse and violence, with specific attention paid to persons with disabilities.

39. El Salvador reported on an initiative devoted to the prevention of violence against women and to restorative measures for survivors of violence. Turkey also noted the special needs of women and girls with disabilities, especially those with mental disabilities, in the context of the delivery of medical and forensic treatment, trauma support and consultancy for the victims of sexual violence. In Spain and the United States of America, government grants are awarded to programmes designed to address abuse and violence against women and girls with disabilities.

Data and statistics

40. Data disaggregated by disability and disability-specific indicators are indispensable in analysis, monitoring and evaluation of the situation of women and girls with disabilities in economic and social development, and are critical to evidence-based policy-making at regional, national and local levels. Several Member States, including Chile, China and Mexico, reported on their continued efforts to tackle the dearth of information and statistics in relation to women and girls with disabilities. The United States reported on the national surveys conducted by the Census Bureau that include data on women with disabilities, including their age, type and severity of disability, race, ethnicity and economic and employment status. Australia highlighted a survey of disability, ageing and carers, which provides a demographic and socioeconomic profile of people with disabilities, carers and older people, providing policymakers and practitioners with an authoritative data source for disability-specific analysis and indicator reporting. The Dominican Republic and Jordan reported on their ongoing initiatives in improving national censuses and surveys with the adoption of the set of disability questions developed by the Washington Group on Disability Statistics.

Partnerships, cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination

41. Recognizing the cross-sectional nature of the challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities in both society and development, many Member States reported recent improvements in coordination and collaboration across government agencies and public institutions. Cambodia, Chile and Jordan have taken concerted measures to mainstream gender and disability into policy development and implementation. Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and the Philippines reported on their efforts in policy coordination and cooperation between offices concerned with gender equality and disability, to take initiatives for improving the well-being of women and girls with disabilities.

42. International cooperation is of vital importance in supporting national efforts for the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities, including for women and girls with disabilities. Through adoption of the strategy, "Development for All 2015-2020", Australia strengthened its commitment to work with its partner governments to improve their national censuses and administrative data set, and data collection on the situation of women and girls with disabilities. In Romania, the National Agency for the Equality of Women and Men, in partnership with the National

Agency for Disabled Persons and the NGO "Active Watch", initiated a project entitled "Justice has no gender", funded by the European Commission, to support national information, awareness-raising and education activities to prevent and combat violence against women. In Turkey, the General Directorate of Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly carried out a project from 2013 to 2016 on support for the implementation and monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in cooperation with UNDP, to increase awareness of the Convention and establish indicators for monitoring the rights of persons with disabilities in the context of national human rights monitoring.

43. The examples outlined in this section show that Member States continue to put effort into advancing the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities and realization of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, some Member States expressed concern that the lack of data, limited capacity to conduct monitoring and evaluation and inadequate financial resources constituted major obstacles impeding their efforts to further advance the rights of women and girls with disabilities in society and development. Jordan reported on the challenge of developing comprehensive data, disaggregated by sex, specifically in relation to women and girls with disabilities. Senegal noted that there was insufficient training for administrators and senior officials of the Government on disability issues and that owing to inadequate financial resources for disability management programmes, the lack of disaggregated statistical data on women with disabilities and the weak partnerships for the promotion of the rights of women with disabilities, it faced major challenges in advancing the status of women and girls with disabilities.

B. United Nations system

44. The United Nations system continues to strengthen coordination and collaboration, to support the development and implementation of international, regional and national initiatives to advance the rights, perspectives and leadership of women and girls with disabilities, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mainstreaming the issue of women and girls with disabilities in the work of the United Nations

45. As the focal point on disability for the United Nations system, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs continues to mainstream gender and disability as an integral part of its work in support for and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international commitments.[18] In recent years, the Department, in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and other relevant entities, has organized a number of events and panel discussions to build a unique policy space for women and girls with disabilities in global programmes for the advancement of persons with disabilities.[19]

[18] See www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/issues/women-and-girls-with-disabilities.html.

[19] For example, a panel discussion entitled "Harnessing the power of women and girls with disabilities for inclusive society and development" at the tenth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, held from 13 to 15 June 2017 in New York; a workshop on women and girls with disabilities at the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held from 13 to 24 March 2017 in New York; and the Expert Group meeting on advancing the rights and perspectives of women and girls with disabilities in development and society, held from 15 to 17 November 2016 in Santiago.

46. Since its establishment, UN-Women has worked in close collaboration with other United Nations entities and offices on advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women in all aspects of the international agenda. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UN-Women continue to work closely to advance the rights and leadership of women and girls with disabilities through intergovernmental processes, including the General Assembly, the Commission on the Status of Women, the Commission for Social Development, the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other relevant processes. In recent years, in conjunction with the Commission on the Status of Women, UN-Women has amplified the voices of women and girls with disabilities through engaging them at the Commission, including making specific reference to them in its strategic plan 2018-2021.[20]

47. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has issued guidelines on the inclusion of learners with disabilities in open and distance learning, reviewing in depth the technology-based approaches used to deliver education to women and men with disabilities. The World Health Organization (WHO) continues to work within the framework of its global disability action plan 2014-2021, in which the barriers faced by women and girls with disabilities are acknowledged through several initiatives.

48. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Volunteer programme have been engaging persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, to contribute their skills and talents in supporting their development, peace and humanitarian programming.[21] The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also supports the participation of women and girls with disabilities in implementing the global development agenda, including by amplifying their voices and promoting their rights and their access to justice and services.

Technical assistance and coordination within the United Nations system

49. Several United Nations entities have continued to provide technical assistance to Member States for the social inclusion, empowerment and leadership of women and girls with disabilities. UN-Women has supported a number of government initiatives in conducting studies or providing information on women and girls with disabilities to inform other policymaking processes.[22] The United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, and the Fund for Gender Equality give special consideration to programmes reaching marginalized populations, including women with disabilities. In its call for proposals this year, the Fund to End Violence against Women plans to open a special thematic window on violence against women and girls with disabilities. UNICEF is working to address the barriers that girls with disabilities face in their everyday life, with a focus on their access to water,

[20] See the agreed conclusions of the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women on women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work and of the sixtieth session on women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development. See also the UN-Women strategic plan, available from www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/executive-board/2017/second-regular-session-2017/unw-2017-6-strategic-plan-en.pdf?la=en&vs=3044.

[21] Women with disabilities are reported to work as UNV advocacy specialists on disability, UNV specialists for improving the rights of persons with disabilities and online volunteers.

[22] In Cabo Verde, Chile, Costa Rica, India, Uruguay and the Gaza Strip.

sanitation and hygiene, and to health information and services.[23] In consultation with Member States, United Nations entities, civil society organizations, national human rights institutions and other stakeholders, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights continues to provide technical advice to Member States on persons with disabilities from the perspective of human rights, including thematic studies in line with the articles in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.[24]

50. The United Nations system is strengthening current efforts to improve disability-specific indicators and their application in analysis, monitoring and evaluation, such as the WHO model disability survey and the UN-Women flagship programme initiative for better production and use of gender statistics for evidence-based localization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

51. Collaboration and coordination among United Nations entities continue to transform the existing "silo" approaches into a more coherent and cohesive inclusion of gender equality and disability through internal existing mechanisms, such as the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Gender perspectives have been successfully included in various United Nations disability-inclusive development agendas through such mechanisms, specifically in the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean co-organized an expert group to formulate a set of recommendations to support the operationalization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other internationally agreed development goals in a way that is inclusive of and responsive to the needs and perspectives of women and girls with disabilities. UNFPA, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Pacific Community, included protection of the rights of young people with disabilities, especially girls, in the formulation of the Pacific youth development framework 2014-2023, securing their specific needs, including access to sexual and reproductive health services.

52. The intersectionality of gender and disability with other factors, such as age, ethnicity and humanitarian crises, has also been addressed by UN-Women, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and UNFPA. For example, recognizing the specific difficulties faced by Palestine refugee women and girls with disabilities, UNRWA developed new technical standards and guidelines to ensure that its premises are physically accessible for persons with disabilities.

C. Civil society organizations

53. Significant progress has been made by civil society organizations in advancing the rights of women and girls with disabilities. There has also been broader and

[23] In Cambodia and Jordan, UNICEF has worked with government ministries to develop national water, sanitation and hygiene standards in schools that are both gender-sensitive and provide standards for accessibility for disabled persons, including guidance on hygiene management In the United Republic of Tanzania, UNICEF has supported the construction of school latrines that are both gender-sensitive and accessible to persons with disabilities. In Guinea-Bissau, UNICEF initiated an HIV prevention and peer counsellor training programme for girls and boys with hearing impairments and their teachers.

[24] Those themes include, but are not limited to, violence against women and girls with disabilities, participation in political and public life, the structure and role of national mechanisms, humanitarian emergencies, independence and inclusion in the community, education and work and employment.

more active participation of organizations of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes at the national, regional and international levels. For example, the tenth session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities welcomed many representatives from civil society, including women and girls with disabilities. Many organizations also reported on their partnerships with local governments in advocating the rights of women and girls with disabilities, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

54. Many civil society organizations are conducting awareness-raising activities and advancing policy research on the issues that specifically impact the lives of women and girls with disabilities. The International Disability Alliance, Making it Work and the World Blind Union, noted the challenges that women and girls with disabilities are faced with, including multiple forms of discrimination, gender-based violence and limited access to justice. Sightsavers reported on their inclusive employment and education programmes aimed at empowering women and girls with disabilities to access their rights. Sightsavers also highlighted their disability-inclusive disaster preparedness programme. The Zero Project reported on efforts made to ensure the rights of women and girls with disabilities to health information and services and to support their self-employment through microfinancing solutions and vocational training.

55. Several civil society organizations noted that the lack of reliable disaggregated data remains a major obstacle to the advancement of women and girls with disabilities.

V. Monitoring and evaluation for the advancement of the status of women and girls with disabilities

56. Lack of data and information on women and girls with disabilities hinders planning processes and the implementation of gender-responsive and disability-inclusive national strategies, policies and programmes.

57. While efforts have been made by Member States, the United Nations system and civil society, the collection of reliable data on women and girls with disabilities remains a challenge. Sustainable Development Goal 5 to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, which addressed many concerns of women and girls with disabilities, including the ending of all forms of discrimination and violence and access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, has provided significant opportunities for strengthening monitoring and evaluation for the advancement of the status of women and girls with disabilities. The Sustainable Development Goal indicators will help in the monitoring and evaluation of the progress made in implementation. The follow-up and review mechanisms of the Goals, including the high-level political forum on sustainable development, voluntary national reviews and the annual report on the Sustainable Development Goals will contribute to ensuring their implementation.

58. The generation of internationally comparable data requires the adoption of a unified method of data collection across all countries. No census or survey is complete until the data collected is made available to users in appropriate formats. In that regard, countries are encouraged to submit data in common reporting formats to the United Nations for further dissemination and to promote the use of existing disability statistics. That reporting will require significant capacity-building efforts at the national level, involving all stakeholders.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

59. **The rights of women and girls with disabilities are often addressed in the context of persons with disabilities and/or women and girls, without attention being paid to the specific multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women and girls with disabilities. In recent years, the specific rights, challenges and perspectives of women and girls with disabilities have been given heightened attention and the concept of inclusive development has been strengthened with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its commitment to leaving no one behind. Furthermore, partnerships and cross-sectoral approaches to promoting the inclusion of women and girls with disabilities have been enhanced. While many Member States have developed national strategies and plans on disability for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, stand-alone policies on women and girls with disabilities remain limited. Major challenges include data collection, national capacity and the mobilization of financial resources in promoting the rights of women and girls with disabilities.**

60. **In addition to the challenges posed by the lack of equal access to information, social services, education and economic, political, social and cultural participation, women and girls with disabilities are often invisible in national laws and policies and remain marginal to global discussions and agreements relevant to their empowerment and advancement.**

61. **The strengthening of the legal and policy frameworks for women and girls with disabilities should be highlighted at the global, regional and national levels. The priority areas to address include multiple forms of discrimination, gender-based violence, the right to sexual and reproductive health, and accessibility in public services and information. Effective coordination, networks and partnerships are crucial in mainstreaming women and girls with disabilities at all levels. Keys for successful implementation include disaggregated data based on disability, adequate financing and engaging women and girls with disabilities in the monitoring and evaluation process.**

62. **In that regard, Member States may wish to consider the following recommendations:**

(a) **Strengthen the normative and policy frameworks for equality and the full participation of women and girls with disabilities in society and development, including, inter alia, ending violence and all forms of discrimination against women and girls with disabilities;**

(b) **Promote the full and effective participation of women and girls with disabilities in the civil, political, economic, social and cultural spheres, and advance their empowerment and leadership roles at all levels of decision-making;**

(c) **Ensure equal opportunities and strengthen equal access to information, education, employment, financial services and health services, including sexual and reproductive health, and enhance accessibility in infrastructure, transportation and technologies, including information and communications technologies for women and girls with disabilities;**

(d) **Strengthen data collection and capacity-building to increase the availability of reliable data disaggregated by sex, age and disability for effective policy development, implementation and monitoring;**

(e) Advance coordination and accountability mechanisms to catalyse work for women and girls with disabilities and build partnerships and networks at the national, regional and global levels among, inter alia, Governments, United Nations entities, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, including women's organizations and organizations of women and persons with disabilities, for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in line with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Annex

Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol thereto

Since the previous report on the Status of the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto (A/69/284), from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2017, there have been 23 additional ratifications,[a] 4 accessions[b] and 2 signatories[c] to the Convention, as well as 4 additional ratifications[d] and 5 accessions[e] to the Optional Protocol.

As of the date of submission of the present report, there were a total of 174 States parties and 160 signatories to the Convention since its opening for signature on 30 March 2007. The European Union, as a regional organization, has also ratified the Convention. There were 92 States parties and 92 signatories to the Optional Protocol. The list of all signatories, ratifications and accessions is available online from https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-15&chapter=4&clang=_en.

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[a] Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belarus, Brunei Darussalam, Central African Republic, Comoros, Congo, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Fiji, Finland, Grenada, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Iceland, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Micronesia (Federated States of), Netherlands, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Viet Nam.

[b] Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Marshall Islands, Sao Tome and Principe.

[c] Belarus and Samoa.

[d] Central African Republic, Congo, Finland and Turkey.

[e] Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Gambia, New Zealand and Thailand.

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Sustainable development

Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 71/223, provides an update on the implementation of processes derived from Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. It presents, in accordance with the request in the resolution, an analysis of the unfinished business of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In that context, it addresses: the outcome of the meeting of the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council from 10 to 19 July 2017, with the theme "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world" and focusing on sustainable development goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14 as well as sustainable development goal 17, which is discussed every year; the implementation of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism including through the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals; the strengthening of the science-policy interface and preparations for the *Global Sustainable Development Report* to be published in 2019; the regional dimension of sustainable development; and sustainable consumption and production. Additionally, in accordance with resolution 71/223, the present report should be read in conjunction with the Secretary-General's report on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/72/75-E/2017/56).

* A/72/150.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/223.

2. On 25 September 2015, the General Assembly adopted the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, entitled "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".

3. As recognized in resolution 71/223, the 2030 Agenda represents a landmark in the mainstreaming into the global development agenda of the legacy of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The concepts and thematic areas covered in these instruments are directly or indirectly encompassed in the 2030 Agenda.

4. The resolution further underlined that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development builds upon elements from the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. In the 2030 Agenda, and directly emanating from the outcome document of the Conference, as part of its determinations on the theme of the "institutional framework for sustainable development", the high-level political forum on sustainable development was mandated, under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, with "the central role in overseeing follow-up and review at the global level".

5. Accordingly, the present report presents an update on: the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council from 10 to 19 July 2017, the second since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda; the implementation of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism; the strengthening of the science-policy interface and an update on the preparation of the *Global Sustainable Development Report*; and the regional dimension of sustainable development. The report also refers to sustainable consumption and production and the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production.

6. Additionally, in accordance with resolution 71/223, the report provides analysis of the unfinished business of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

7. The present report should be read in conjunction with other reports on sustainable development submitted to the General Assembly, in particular the report on the mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/72/75-E/2017/56), which is mandated by resolution 71/223.

II. Follow-up and review

A. Meeting of the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council

8. The high-level political forum on sustainable development held its second meeting since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda from 10 to 19 July 2017, under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. The meeting included a three-day ministerial segment.

9. In preparation for the meeting, the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council and other intergovernmental bodies and forums were invited to share relevant input and their deliberations with regard to addressing the Sustainable Development Goals and targets from the perspective of "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". A number of them also addressed the Goals under discussion (1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17). Thirty-eight submissions were received from the functional commissions and expert bodies of the Council, other intergovernmental bodies and multi stakeholder platforms. A synthesis of these voluntary submissions has been prepared (see E/HLPF/2017/3). Submissions were also received from major groups and other stakeholders on their contribution to implementation (see E/HLPF/2017/2).

10. The high-level political forum on sustainable development discussed all six Sustainable Development Goals mandated for the 2017 high-level political forum session, together with Sustainable Development Goal 17, which is discussed each year. All sessions on individual goals were approached from the perspective of interlinkages with other goals and from all three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental. The guidance and recommendations given, including through the Ministerial Declaration of the high-level political forum, followed the same pattern of interlinkages, to draw attention to the coherence and coordination necessary at all levels for the advancement of the 2030 Agenda and the Goals.

11. The critical role of the high-level political forum on sustainable development as the global platform for follow-up and review was confirmed, as it had firmly established itself as a space for considering challenges and structural barriers that require coordinated action at the global level. The facilitative momentum of the high-level political forum also enhanced national efforts towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

12. The theme of the high-level political forum, "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world", was discussed through "addressing multi-dimensions of poverty and inequalities". It was discussed also from a multi-stakeholder perspective and the perspective of countries in special situations as well as middle-income countries. The messages included:

(a) Many dimensions of poverty and deprivation must be addressed in order to eradicate poverty worldwide;

(b) Deprivation in the areas of health care, education, economic opportunity, gender empowerment, housing and natural resource management, among others, has a direct correlation to poverty;

(c) High-quality, disaggregated data was seen as central to support decision-making and efforts to eradicate poverty by addressing interlocking negative trends such as climate change, the destruction of natural resources that provide ecosystem services, pollution and other environmental stressors that can undermine progress;

(d) The Multidimensional Poverty Index was noted as a useful tool for the analysis of domestic poverty conditions, complementing traditional, income-based measures;

(e) National mainstreaming of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Sustainable Development Goals, inclusive of mid-term frameworks and budgets, is critical in order to foster national ownership of the 2030 Agenda and ensure positive synergies. Building capacity across all sectors is necessary, as is public information-sharing to enhance transparency and accountability and to build trust;

(f) Stakeholder engagement and effective partnerships of all kinds are key to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for small island developing States;

(g) Development finance for countries in special situations needs to be more reliable, sourced from multiple stakeholders and targeted towards the specific needs of different countries;

(h) Unemployment remains the greatest challenge for the least developed countries, which means that ensuring sustained, greener economic growth remains a priority;

(i) Landlockedness poses particular challenges that should be addressed through better access to markets and to new, context-specific technologies, while post-conflict countries expressed specific development needs that often arise from fragmentation of development planning;

(j) Middle-income countries suggested that their classification include an assessment that goes beyond income per capita assessment and takes into account life expectancy, institutional development, people living in poverty, vulnerable groups, unemployment and technological progress, among other indicators.

13. During the session dedicated to assessing "where we are at year two", the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs presented the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2017/66), an overview of global progress towards the 17 Goals of the 2030 Agenda, on the basis of a selection of indicators for which data were available as at April 2017. For most indicators presented in the report, values represent global, regional and subregional aggregates and are calculated from data from national statistical systems, compiled by international agencies, on the basis of their respective mandates and specialized expertise.

14. Other discussions were held on issues relevant to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including: new ideas, insights and solutions on the science-policy interface; investing in and financing for the Sustainable Development Goals; making the 2030 Agenda deliver for small island developing States, building on the SAMOA Pathway; countries in special situations; and multi stakeholder engagement for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. An interactive dialogue on regional experiences was held with the executive secretaries of the regional commissions and representatives of other regional organizations.

15. The following main messages derived from the discussions on the six Sustainable Development Goals (on poverty, hunger, health, gender, infrastructure and industrialization and oceans) as well as Sustainable Development Goal 17:[1]

(a) Poverty is not defined by monetary income alone — the many dimensions of poverty and deprivation must be considered and addressed in order eradicate poverty worldwide. Equity is therefore seen as a fundamental principle for all efforts;

(b) Social inclusion and engagement of all relevant stakeholders is an important precondition for poverty eradication;

(c) Poverty measurements and statistics need to be socially relevant. So far, many poor countries have relied mainly on economic growth for their poverty reduction efforts, but in order to tackle relative poverty, measuring growth alone will not suffice;

[1] For more information, see the President's summary of the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development. Available from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf.

(d) High-quality, disaggregated data is central to any successful efforts to eradicate poverty;

(e) Multidimensional poverty is influenced by several interlocking negative trends such as climate change, the destruction of natural resources that provide ecosystem services, pollution and other environmental stressors that can undermine anti-poverty efforts;

(f) Urgent action is required to respond to the severe food insecurity and malnutrition crises, famine and threat of famine that we are seeing today and to reduce the likelihood of their recurrence in the near future;

(g) Legal frameworks must be strengthened to promote a rights-based approach, including the right to food and secure equitable tenure rights over land, water and fisheries resources;

(h) Women's empowerment and gender equality are key to achieving food security and sustainable agriculture. If women can have equal access to land, productive assets and decision-making, then agricultural yields would rise while hunger and malnutrition would be reduced;

(i) Agricultural transformation must become more knowledge-intensive to achieve income and productivity targets for small and family farmers;

(j) Health solutions will need to connect with efforts in education, nutrition, empowerment of women and girls, climate change and air pollution and financial mechanisms such as taxation;

(k) Equity is a fundamental principle that must be intentionally and proactively pursued — universal health coverage is an essential means for achieving equity in health care and for leaving no one behind;

(l) Adequate funding for health, including research and innovation, community-based interventions, health infrastructure and social safety nets is needed by government and stakeholders including the private sector;

(m) Achieving gender equality is not only a goal in itself, but a prerequisite for prosperous societies and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda as a whole;

(n) While remarkable efforts have been made in setting laws and policies, two years is still early to map out the full progress on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, as systemic and structural changes in this area take time and still have a long way to go;

(o) Robust and well-planned infrastructure underpins all economic growth and is a prerequisite for access to basic services and for boosting industrialization. Investment in "social infrastructure" is needed in order that benefits from industrialization can be shared by all;

(p) Resilient, green infrastructure safeguards citizens and can simultaneously provide solutions for both mitigation of and adaptation to climate change;

(q) Investments and policy planning need to be industry-specific, building on the strengths and strong sectors of each country and need to be based on best technology and innovation;

(r) The digital economy has created unprecedented opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises to access new markets through electronic platforms, and new rules for e-commerce could establish an internationally level playing field for these actors to thrive;

(s) The high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development (Ocean Conference), held in June

2017 at United Nations Headquarters in New York and hosted by Fiji and Sweden, created universal momentum to forge new partnerships to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14;

(t) The ocean faces many challenges, from marine pollution to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, but it also provides a number of opportunities especially to those countries, in particular small island developing States, that rely on oceans for their livelihood;

(u) Over the past two years, the international community has seen notable progress in the implementation of the Addis Abba Action Agenda, which provides the comprehensive financing framework for the Sustainable Development Goals;

(v) Investing in the Sustainable Development Goals is not just about finance, but also about institutional change and better governance in support of a coherent framework for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(w) Significant gaps remain and the current global environment presents numerous challenges to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. To overcome these challenges, the international community must act with a sense of urgency by fully implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda at all levels;

(x) It is necessary to focus on systemic economic development rather than piecemeal projects and align financing mechanisms with the systemic model. Further efforts are needed to make a strong business case for investing in the Sustainable Development Goals to mobilize private capital for financing sustainable development and take advantage of the increased interest of the private sector in the 2030 Agenda;

(y) There is a need further exploring new approaches to channel finance into sustainable development. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals requires the full participation of all stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society. At the same time, there is a need for increased transparency and public scrutiny, in particular when it comes to public-private partnerships. In this context, the United Nations is the right place to explore guidelines to ensure that interactions with the private sector share risks and rewards fairly, include clear accountability mechanisms and meet social and environmental standards.

16. During the ministerial segment of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, 43 countries[2] presented voluntary national reviews, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 67/290, 70/1 and 70/299. The main messages provided by the countries presenting voluntary national reviews are contained in a note by the Secretariat (E/HLPF/2017/6). The Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs provided support for the preparation of these reviews, under the leadership and guidance of the President of the Economic and Social Council through workshops (global and regional) that allowed for the exchange of ideas, practices and information and enabled collective reflection on how to present voluntary national reviews to the high-level political forum, in the context of advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level.

17. The main issues raised during the voluntary national reviews were the following:

[2] Afghanistan, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Monaco, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Slovenia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Uruguay and Zimbabwe.

(a) National preparations were considered extensive and impactful, a welcome tool for keeping up the momentum on implementation efforts, in part due to strong commitment from the highest levels of government;

(b) There is a need to nationalize and localize the 2030 Agenda, to create true ownership of the Agenda, and for that a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach is necessary. Inclusiveness and engagement of all stakeholders in the process were seen as essential;

(c) Policymaking for the Sustainable Development Goals needs to become more effective, for instance through active political commitment and engagement by community and traditional leaders, opinion leaders, the media and political leaders to address the social, economic and environmental challenges faced by the countries;

(d) Identifying interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals and within Goals at the target level is critical and should translate into the policymaking, budgeting and institutional structures and processes at the national and subnational levels. This principle should also guide multilateral cooperation to ensure effective coordination and policy coherence;

(e) Countries recognized the essential role of data for monitoring and review at the national level and that is why national statistics offices are already being tasked with monitoring progress of the Sustainable Development Goals and the mapping of all Goal indicators, including the development of baseline reports. However, capacity assessments and measures to close capacity gaps still need to be undertaken;

(f) Countries are working on developing data literacy, capacity to disaggregate traditional indicators and develop non-traditional ones. There is a need to work towards integrating diverse monitoring and evaluation structures into a single national system, which will reduce parallel structures for monitoring and overlaps in data collection.

18. Additionally, during the ministerial segment, a session was held with chairs of regional forums for the preparation of the high-level political forum on sustainable development on synergies and coherence between regional and global levels on the basis of main messages from regional forums; and daily sessions of the general debate were held on the theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

19. The high-level political forum also included over a hundred side-events, a partnership exchange event for multi-stakeholder partnerships to share knowledge and expertise to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, SDG Learning, a business forum on the Goals and a learning and practice programme related to the Goals and a forum of chief sustainability officers.

20. The high-level political forum on sustainable development closed with the adoption of a ministerial declaration (E/2017/L.29-E/HLPF/2017/L.2).

B. Technology Facilitation Mechanism — the way forward

21. In the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Heads of State and Government decided to establish a Technology Facilitation Mechanism, based on multi-stakeholder collaboration among Member States, civil society, the private sector, the scientific community, United Nations entities and other stakeholders. The Mechanism was launched by Heads of State and Government in the 2030 Agenda in September 2015 and has three components: (a) the United Nations inter-agency task team on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals; (b) the

collaborative annual multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals; and (c) an online platform to serve as a gateway for information on existing science, technology and innovation initiatives, mechanisms and programmes within and beyond the United Nations system.

22. The membership of the inter-agency task team has increased to 35 active members, which contributed the time of more than 80 staff members to the joint endeavour. The inter-agency task team has worked closely with the Group of 10 high-level representatives of civil society, the private sector and the scientific community in support of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism ("10-Member Group"). This includes joint meetings and working-level initiatives on key issues. Several joint Mechanism activities are being planned for the coming months.

23. The inter-agency task team and the 10-Member Group held the second multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation in New York on 15 and 16 May 2017. The forum attracted more than 800 participants, representing a cross-section of scientists, innovators, technology specialists, entrepreneurs, policymakers and civil society representatives. An exhibition hub featured 12 innovators from across the world, selected through a competitive process.

24. The forum explored policies and actions for advancing science, technology and innovation for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It welcomed the progress of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism in facilitating multi-stakeholder collaboration and partnerships and proposed recommendations for action which are detailed in the Co-Chairs' Summary of the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals (E/HLPF/2017/4). They include the following: (a) in view of technological solutions ("low-tech" and "high-tech") with transformative impact on the Goals, scientists and innovators need to engage with the realities of local communities, in order to pay more attention to meeting needs through existing low-cost technologies; (b) attention should be paid to scaling up smart investment by Governments, the private sector and other partners, including for building productive and human capacity for science, technology and innovation to unlock the creative potential of all; (c) flexible, participatory science, technology and innovation roadmaps at national and global levels are essential to prioritize actions and promote cross-sectoral collaborations for the Goals, which need to include "deep dives" for each Goal; (d) there are positive and negative impacts from the disruptive effects on societies of new technologies, such as nanotechnology, automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, gene editing, big data and 3D printing, and a good understanding of the possible consequences of decisions is essential; (e) while a common understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals has emerged in recent years, there is a need for collaborative work, including by the Mechanism, to safeguard the voice of science in support of the policy discourse, including through open science, universal access and sharing. This is important as science is the ultimate renewable and cumulative resource; (f) there is a need to increase investment in science, technology and innovation, build science, technology and innovation capacity and respective communities around the world in a sustainable manner; (g) There is a need for support for full operationalization of the Mechanism as a catalyst for multi-stakeholder partnerships; (h) There is a need to further explore new methods and engagement structures to incentivize private sector actors to channel their technology- and innovation-related initiatives and efforts into the United Nations science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals process.

25. The independent assessment of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism online platform was completed, as mandated by the 2030 Agenda. Following an open call, independent experts from the Institute of Science and Development of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, China; the Overseas Development Institute, United Kingdom; and of Det Norske Veritas (DNV GL), the Netherlands, prepared the assessment.

The report is available on the Sustainable Development Goals website[3] for comments and expressions of interest to contribute to the development and maintenance of the platform. The 10-Member Group examined the report and found it a useful basis for further discussion and action. Joint work by the inter-agency task team and the 10-Member Group has now begun on the actual development of the Mechanism platform.

26. The inter-agency task team has also begun cooperation on a joint capacity-building pilot project initiated by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Furthermore, the inter-agency task team has begun exploring the impacts of exponential technological change, automation technologies and artificial intelligence on the Sustainable Development Goals — a process which was kick-started by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) through an expert group meeting in Mexico in December 2016 and further explored in dedicated sessions in 2017 at the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development, and by the International Telecommunication Union AI for Good Global Summit.

C. Strengthening the science-policy interface and the *Global Sustainable Development Report*

27. At the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development the need was emphasized to continue strengthening the science-policy interface to support evidence-based policies for the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. A scientific understanding of the interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals and of the potential impacts of new and emerging issues is critical in order to achieve the Goals. The discussions at the high-level political forum highlighted the need for new and innovative approaches to mobilize and motivate the scientific community to find solutions for pressing development challenges. The forum noted that a successful science-policy interface needs to be inclusive. It needs to take in natural and social sciences, engage beyond academia, consider traditional and indigenous knowledge, include a wider range of stakeholders, be executed as dialogues and promote partnerships at all levels and among developed and developing countries.

28. The discussions at the 2017 high-level political forum highlighted policies and actions for advancing the science, technology and innovation for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The discussions emphasized that there are challenges and opportunities for technological solutions for the Goals. There is a need to pay more attention to meeting needs through existing low-cost technologies and to remove barriers to scaling up proven solutions. These require scientists and innovators to engage with the realities of local communities and policymakers to provide enabling conditions. Flexible and participatory science, technology and innovation roadmaps for the Goals, at the national and global levels, could play a supporting role in this regard. The discussions also emphasized that it is critical to understand the potential positive and negative impacts of new technologies, such as nanotechnology, automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, gene editing, big data and 3D printing, to harness these technologies for sustainable development.

29. The discussions also emphasized the importance of the *Global Sustainable Development Report* to strengthening the science-policy interface. In the ministerial declaration of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development

[3] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/tfm.

(E/HLS/2016/1), the Member States decided that the *Report* would provide guidance on the state of global sustainable development from a scientific perspective, which will help address the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, provide lessons learned, while focusing on challenges, address new and emerging issues and highlight emerging trends and actions. It was further decided that the Report would be prepared once every four years for the meetings of the political forum under the auspices of the General Assembly and that the report would be drafted by an independent group of scientists supported by a task team, co-chaired by one representative each of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the World Bank, with the logistical support of the United Nations Secretariat. In December 2016, after an extensive consultation process with Member States and relevant United Nations organizations, the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, appointed a group of scientists[4] as members of that independent group.

30. The independent group of scientists and the United Nations task team have convened two meetings for the preparation of the 2019 *Global Sustainable Development Report*. At the first meeting, held in New York from 21 to 23 February 2017, the activities to ensure the scientific credibility, legitimacy and relevance of the 2019 *Report* were identified. Also agreed upon was the establishment of working groups to initiate the conceptualization of the building blocks of the report. At the second meeting, held at Glen Cove, United States of America, from 14 to 19 July 2017, the conceptualization and structuring of the report was advanced and a workplan prepared for engaging with scientific communities and other stakeholders. The independent group of scientists is expected to involve scientists from all

[4] Wolfgang Lutz (Austria), Founding Director of the Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital, Program Director of the World Population Program at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis and Director of the Vienna Institute of Demography of the Austrian Academy of Sciences; Jean-Pascal van Ypersele (Belgium), Co-Director of the Interdisciplinary Master Programme in Science and Management of the Environment, Université catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium; Parfait Ekoundou-Enyegue (Cameroon), Professor and Department Chair of Development Sociology, Cornell University, New York; Katherine Richardson (Denmark), Professor of Biological Oceanography, Leader of the Sustainability Science Center at the University of Copenhagen and leader of the macroecology and oceanography theme at the Center for Macroecology, Evolution and Climate; Eeva Furman (Finland), Director of the Environmental Policy Centre at the Finnish Environment Institute SYKE and Chair of the Finnish National Expert Panel on Sustainable Development; Jean-Paul Moatti (France), Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of the French Research Institute for Development (IRD); Ernest Foli (Ghana), Principal Research Scientist at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research Forestry Research Institute of Ghana; Endah Murniningtyas (Indonesia), former Deputy Minister for National Resources and Environment at the Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency of Indonesia; David Smith (Jamaica), Coordinator of the Institute for Sustainable Development at the University of the West Indies, Coordinator of the University Consortium for Small Island States and the Caribbean Chair for the Sustainable Development Solutions Network; Muhammad Saidam (Jordan), Director of the Environment Monitoring and Research Central Unit in the Royal Scientific Society in Jordan; Jurgis Staniskis (Lithuania), full member of the Lithuanian Academy of Science, Professor at Kaunas University of Technology and Director of the Institute of Environmental Engineering; Gonzalo Hernández Licona (Mexico), Executive Secretary of the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy; Eun Mee Kim (Republic of Korea), Professor and Dean at the Graduate School of International Studies and Director of the Institute for Development and Human Security at Ewha Womans University in Seoul, Republic of Korea; Peter Messerli (Switzerland), Director and Professor for Sustainable Development, Centre for Development and Environment, Institute of Geography, University of Bern, and Co-chair of Future Earth's Global Land Programme; and Amanda Glassman (United States), Chief Operating Officer and senior fellow at the Center for Global Development, Washington, D.C.

disciplines, in different languages, with a special effort to reach out to scientists from developing countries. They will also connect with other stakeholders.

D. Regional dimension of sustainable development

31. The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development ("The future we want"), General Assembly resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda all acknowledge the importance of the regional dimension of sustainable development, including follow-up and review at the regional level, alongside the national and global levels.

32. Since the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and in response to the mandate of the General Assembly calling on the regional commissions to contribute to the work of the high-level political forum, including through regional meetings (resolution 67/290), States Members of the regional commissions have established regional forums for sustainable development: the fourth session of the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, was held in Bangkok in March 2017; the Economic Commission for Europe held its second regional forum on sustainable development in Geneva in April 2017; the fourth session of the Arab Regional Forum for Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, was held in Rabat in May 2017; the third session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the Economic Commission for Africa and other bodies, was held in Addis Ababa in May 2017; and the first Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, organized by ECLAC, met in Mexico City in May 2017.

33. Reports of the regional forums on sustainable development and regional preparatory meetings to the high-level political forum are contained in a note by the Secretariat (E/HLPF/2017/1, Adds. 1-5). Regional efforts and perspectives on supporting implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and on enhancing support for its implementation are contained in the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2017/15).

34. In the sessions on the implementation at the regional and subregional levels and main messages delivered by the ministerial chairs of the regional forums on sustainable development held during the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development, it was stressed that regional and subregional organizations and initiatives provide important platforms for addressing regional priorities and challenges, mobilizing collective action and addressing transboundary issues. They are critical for ensuring the coherence and integration of the 2030 Agenda with regional agendas and visions, for integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans and for strengthening the capacity of Governments to implement the Agenda. Building capacity with regard to data, in particular data disaggregation, is an area where regional organizations can contribute, and are already doing so. Such capacity-building is necessary to monitor the imperative of leaving no one behind. Regional forums on sustainable development will be a key part of the follow-up and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, establishing a link between national and global processes.

35. The messages from these regional forums emphasized in particular that governance and national ownership in consultation with all stakeholders is critical and that transformational change will require additional restructuring of policies in order to recognize social justice and align it with finance and development. In

particular, means of implementation including official development assistance, climate finance and South-South cooperation are important. It was specifically mentioned that eliminating hunger and ensuring food security requires addressing productivity, buying power and production together and understanding the root causes of food insecurity. Adapting the Sustainable Development Goals to local contexts, inventorying legal frameworks and strategies and integrating the Goals through parliaments; cross-border agreements; and the collection and disaggregation of data by strengthening the role of stakeholders and the United Nations system were also emphasized.

E. Sustainable consumption and production and the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production

36. Sustainable consumption and production is a cross-cutting goal that goes beyond Sustainable Development Goal 12 and clearly illustrates the interconnectedness of the Sustainable Development Goals. Many other Goal targets involve some aspect of sustainable consumption and production, namely, producing goods and providing services that allow for economic growth and development while maintaining natural resources for future generations. It is also an issue which clearly illustrates the interlinkages between the 2030 Agenda and other intergovernmental agreements, such as the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Achieving both agendas will require coherent and complementary approaches to implementation. The nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement already address several Goals, and there is significant correlation at the target level. Effective coordination in the design and implementation of nationally determined contributions and Goals will accelerate the advancement of both agendas and optimize results.

37. At the 2017 high-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, sustainable consumption and production was addressed with respect to the adverse impacts of climate change on the ocean. Increased greenhouse gas emissions are causing more carbon dioxide to be absorbed by the oceans from the atmosphere, resulting in oceans that are 30 per cent more acidic than before the industrial revolution. Acidification is detrimental to marine ecosystems and makes the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans an even greater challenge. Maintaining the health and productivity of the ocean, as the world's most important provider of food and nutrition, is critical. In this regard, the Paris Agreement plays a crucial role in reversing ocean decline by establishing nationally determined contributions to facilitate the curbing of global greenhouse gas emissions.

38. Sustainable consumption and production reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 12 and other targets decouples economic growth and improved standard of living from greenhouse gas emissions. This is especially important in rapidly urbanizing cities since they contribute most of the greenhouse gas emissions globally. Cities today occupy approximately only 2 per cent of total land but contribute 70 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Achieving a low-carbon future (Sustainable Development Goal 13) requires a transition from fossil fuels to renewable energies. In addition, various sectors, including transportation, infrastructure and industry, should strengthen and uphold energy efficiency standards, improve operating performance and reduce greenhouse gases in the production of goods and services. Sustainable Development Goal 12, among others, will be reviewed in the 2018 high-level political forum under the theme "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies".

39. The New Urban Agenda, adopted at the Habitat III Conference, generates an opportunity to envision the world's urban future with sustainable consumption and production as a leading driver. Implementing the New Urban Agenda will be a key tool for national, subnational and local governments and all relevant stakeholders to achieve sustainable urban development.

40. At the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development, sustainable consumption and production was considered to be a critical Sustainable Development Goal uniting many Goal targets. The achievement of 49 targets spread across 13 Goals depends on a shift towards sustainable consumption and production. However, the achievement of greater resource efficiency requires coherence and coordination across various levels of government and government departments. Sustainable Development Goal coordination must take place at the centre of government, with political commitment and leadership at the highest level. Only then can resilient local, national and global economies be achieved and all relevant agendas, such as the Paris Agreement and New Urban Agenda, successfully realized.

F. Partnership and voluntary commitments and engagement of stakeholders

41. It has been widely recognized that implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals cannot be achieved by Governments alone. This is underlined in the preamble to the 2030 Agenda itself, in which it is stated that all countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement this plan (see General Assembly resolution 70/1). In addition, one of the 5 Ps is "partnership", whereby the means required to implement the 2030 Agenda are mobilized with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people. The importance of multi-stakeholder partnerships is specifically underscored in Sustainable Development Goal 17 as a means to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Goals.

42. The effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnerships, while dependent on many factors, will increasingly be tied to their ability to manage and share knowledge and expertise about the issues, processes and solutions that they are promoting. The universality of the Sustainable Development Goals will require, inter alia, that the knowledge and expertise managed and possessed by multi-stakeholder partnerships need to be shared as widely as possible for it to reach beyond immediate constituencies and communities and to have an impact on a global scale. Therefore, in support of the 2030 Agenda and implementation of the Goals, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs maintains the online platform for the partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals,[5] which is aimed at providing global engagement for multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments from all stakeholders. At the time of writing, the platform contains links to over 3,500 partnerships and other initiatives.

43. In response to Member States stressing the need to develop ways to improve transparency, accountability and the sharing of experiences of multi-stakeholder partnerships and on the review and monitoring of these partnerships, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Global Compact and the United Nations Office for Partnerships have developed a framework for partnership data for the Sustainable Development Goals[6] in an effort to harmonize the way in which information on voluntary commitments and partnerships is published on websites and associated knowledge products. By providing a unified

[5] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdinaction/register.

[6] For more information, see https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdinaction/pd4sdgs.

framework for how information is published, the framework aims to bring greater transparency, coherence, impact and comparability with regard to the work carried out by multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary initiatives in their support of the Goals.

44. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs also provides support to the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework[7] as a direct follow-up to the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which was held from 1 to 4 September 2014 in Apia, under the overarching theme "The sustainable development of Small Island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships", and at which approximately 300 small island developing States partnerships were announced.

45. In support of Goal 17 and the overall follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Partnerships, holds an annual Partnership Exchange special event on the margins of the high-level political forum on sustainable development to provide a forum for sharing knowledge and expertise among multi-stakeholder partnerships and stakeholders. The Partnership Exchange special event is focused on reviewing partnerships and voluntary commitments clustered around the set of Sustainable Development Goals reviewed at the high-level political forum each year. In 2017, the Partnership Exchange special event was focused on the Goals that were under review at the 2017 high-level political forum and showed how multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments addressed challenges and needs encountered by countries taking part in the voluntary national reviews, by sharing their expertise and lessons learned.

46. To increase transparency and accountability, registered partnerships are requested to report annually on their progress and their reports are reflected in the Partnership report that is issued annually.[8]

47. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has, in collaboration with partners, established a registry of voluntary commitments gathered around the Ocean Conference, held from 5 to 9 June 2017 at United Nations Headquarters, with the attendance of Heads of State and Government, other high-level representatives from Governments, the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations, as well as the full participation of civil society, the scientific community, the business sector and other relevant stakeholders.

III. Unfinished business of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

48. The General Assembly, in its resolution 71/223, requested the Secretary-General to include in his report analysis of the unfinished business of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of

[7] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/partnerships/sidspartnershipframework. For more information, see the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/72/214).

[8] The 2016 Partnership report is available from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2329Partnership%20Report%202016%20web.pdf. The following report will be issued in the last quarter of 2017.

the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

49. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1), adopted in 2015, is universal: all countries and all stakeholders, acting in collaborative partnership, will implement the Agenda, which represents a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. The Agenda emerged from the realization that humanity had not progressed on the road to sustainability as far as was hoped in 1992 or in 2012 at the second Rio conference.

50. We can celebrate some notable successes, in particular the fact that hundreds of millions of people have been lifted from poverty during the last two decades. Yet, many of the global problems we are facing today are more acute or larger in scale than they were even five years ago.

51. The Agenda thus builds on previous agreements and frameworks, notably the Millennium Development Goals and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, wherein, respectively, the principles of sustainable development goals were defined and the high-level forum on sustainable development established, with the aim of following up and reviewing the Goals.

52. The study of the unfinished business of Agenda 21, whose full content is available on the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform[9] is a comparison primarily between the Agenda 21 and the 2030 Agenda, but also with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda and the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex). It is evident in the comparative study that Agenda 21 is a very comprehensive document, but which reflects the realities of the 1990s. New economic powers have emerged, while the interdependence of national economies has grown. We have become increasingly dependent on growing energy consumption and international trade. The importance of the private sector in influencing sustainability outcomes globally has grown. It was felt that a new compact was needed to adjust to a globalized world and global threats that could be addressed only through common action and partnership. For this reason, the Heads of State and Government adopted the 2030 Agenda to address the increasingly globalized challenges and mounting inequities.

53. The 2030 Agenda is all-encompassing, as it builds on the five Ps (people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership), interlinking the Sustainable Development Goals, thus ensuring realization of the full Agenda in order to make globalization fair and benefiting all and making lives better for all, including the most vulnerable, and leaving no one behind. This aspect addressed the realities that have emerged since the adoption of Agenda 21 and subsequent agreements.

54. The 2030 Agenda is undoubtedly a more comprehensive framework, as it is universal and encompasses the full range of issues important for humanity. It builds on the previous sustainable development agreements, which still have much to offer in terms of policy guidance and commitments to action. Notably, Agenda 21 remains a very comprehensive document, with detailed guidance in a number of areas, in particular economic, trade and environmental, that can be of value in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

[9] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/resources/sdissuesbriefs.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

55. Two years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, there is evidence of firm commitment at all levels and of engagement from multiple stakeholders for its implementation. The adoption and initial stages of implementation of the 2030 Agenda itself are major steps towards the ambitions expressed in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, setting the stage for inclusive, sustainable development. However, there is equal evidence of multiple and significant challenges ahead. The role of the United Nations system will be critical to help countries overcome these challenges. The experience gained from the 2017 high-level political forum will be invaluable in the development of the agenda of subsequent sessions and in ensuring the effectiveness of the contribution of the political forum to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

56. In this context, the General Assembly may consider, at its seventy-second session:

(a) Inviting Member States and other stakeholders to continue to fully engage in support of the work of the high-level political forum in order to consolidate its central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes at the global level;

(b) Inviting the President of the Economic and Social Council to consider, with support from the United Nations system, means of ensuring that national and regional preparatory processes to the high-level political forum, as well as relevant international processes, are adequately reflected at the meetings of the forum, so as to make full use of those processes for the benefit of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to enhance policy coordination and coherence;

(c) Inviting Member States and entities of the United Nations system to continue to ensure multi-stakeholder participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and in preparatory processes for the high-level political forum and voluntary national reviews;

(d) Inviting the Secretary-General to revise his proposal for voluntary common reporting guidelines for voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum taking into account the experience of the voluntary national reviews in the 2016 and 2017 high-level political forums on sustainable development;

(e) Calling on the United Nations system to continue to support Member States that request assistance in the preparation of voluntary national reviews;

(f) Encouraging Member States that submitted voluntary national reviews in 2016 and 2017 to share their experiences in support of the countries volunteering to submit reviews in future years, including in a regional setting;

(g) Encouraging the scientific community to contribute to the *Global Sustainable Development Report* and to submit voluntary science-based inputs focusing on the annual theme of the high-level political forum;

(h) Encouraging Member States to support the production of the *Global Sustainable Development Report*, including through voluntary contributions;

(i) Inviting all United Nations organizations, within their respective mandates, to consider the theme and set of goals of the 2018 high-level political forum in their work in order to enhance coherence and ensure that full use is made of the potential of the United Nations system to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(j) Inviting the General Assembly and the high-level political forum on sustainable development to address unfinished business of the previous agreements on sustainable development.

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General Assembly

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Seventy-second session
Item 73 (a) of the provisional agenda*
Promotion and protection of human rights: implementation of human rights instruments

United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/122, provides an overview of the work of the United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery, in particular the recommendations for grants to beneficiary organizations that were adopted by the Board of Trustees of the fund at its twenty-first session, held in Geneva from 28 November to 2 December 2016. It also provides information on other recommendations adopted by the Board.

* A/72/150.

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I. Introduction

A. Submission of the report

1. The present report was prepared in accordance with the arrangements approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/122, by which it established the United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery. It presents the recommendations adopted by the Board of Trustees of the fund at its twenty-first session, held in Geneva from 28 November to 2 December 2016. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights approved those recommendations on behalf of the Secretary-General on 20 December 2016.

B. Mandate of the fund

2. In line with resolution 46/122, the fund was established with the purpose of extending humanitarian, legal and financial aid to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. The fund receives voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations, private or public entities and individuals.

C. Administration of the fund and Board of Trustees

3. The Secretary-General administers the fund through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), with the advice of a Board of Trustees and in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

4. The Board of Trustees is composed of five members with relevant experience in the field of human rights and, in particular, issues of contemporary forms of slavery. They serve in their personal capacity and are appointed by the Secretary-General with due regard to equitable geographical distribution. The current members of the Board are Renu Rajbhandari (Nepal), Leonardo Sakamoto (Brazil) and Nevena Vučković-Šahović (Serbia), who has served as Chairperson of the Board since its twentieth session. The mandates of Michael Beresford Dottridge (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and George Omona (Uganda) ended on 31 December 2016 and new trustees will be appointed by the Secretary-General.

II. Management of grants

A. Admissibility criteria

5. In accordance with the mandate of the fund as set out in General Assembly resolution 46/122, the beneficiaries of assistance from the fund are individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of contemporary forms of slavery. Project admissibility criteria are outlined in the fund's guidelines. The aim of project proposals should be the delivery of assistance services to beneficiaries, who must be victims of contemporary forms of slavery and, when applicable, members of their families. As indicated in the fund's guidelines, contemporary forms of slavery that qualify for project grants by the fund include traditional slavery, serfdom, servitude, forced labour, debt bondage, the worst forms of child labour, forced and early marriage, the sale of wives and inherited widows, trafficking in persons and human organs, sexual slavery, the sale of children, the

commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in armed conflict.

6. Priority in allocating grants is accorded to projects implemented by civil society organizations that aim to provide reparation, empowerment and integration of victims of contemporary forms of slavery through direct assistance. This may include medical, psychological, social, legal, humanitarian and educational assistance, vocational or skills training or other assistance in support of an independent livelihood.[1]

7. By 1 March 2016, the deadline for submitting applications for project grants for 2017, the fund had received 99 applications. After the applications were pre-screened by the secretariat of the fund, 87 were declared admissible and were examined by the Board at its twenty-first session.

8. The deadline for submitting applications for project grants for 2018 was 1 March 2017. Admissible project applications will be examined by the Board at its twenty-second session, to be held in Geneva from 27 November to 1 December 2017. In 2018, the Board will continue to give priority to project proposals intended to assist women and children victims of slavery as a consequence of conflicts and humanitarian crises, as well as proposals intended to support victims' access to justice.

B. Monitoring and evaluation by the secretariat of the fund

9. At its twenty-first session, the Board was presented with 87 admissible applications for project grants to be awarded and put to use in 2017. Before the session, 27 of the project proposals were evaluated through on-site visits by staff of the secretariat of the fund, OHCHR country and regional offices, human rights components of peacekeeping missions and members of the Board. On-site pre-screening and technical evaluation visits to applicant organizations are a key methodology of the fund. On-site visits are coordinated by OHCHR, for cost-efficiency purposes, with visits undertaken on behalf of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture.

III. Financial situation of the fund

10. Notwithstanding the fundraising and outreach efforts of the members of the Board and the secretariat of the fund, which resulted in an increase in the yearly income of the fund for 2017 and in the expansion of its donor base, the fund remains underfunded. Since 2002, the fund has received a total of $7.9 million in contributions from Member States, which represents an average yearly income of $500,000. A peak of contributions was observed in 2009, with income amounting to $886,000. In order to meaningfully fulfil its mandate and adequately respond to the needs of victims, the fund requires at least $2 million in contributions each year. The contributions received in 2016 for 2017 covered only 38 per cent of that target. For 2018, the fund aims to reach the symbolic ceiling of $1 million in contributions, encouraged by the positive feedback received on its operations by an increasing number of State representatives.

11. The table below shows the contributions and pledges received in 2016.

[1] Detailed information on the types of assistance provided to victims through the projects financed by the fund, as well as their impact on the lives of the identified beneficiaries, can be found at www.ohchr.org/slaveryfund. Brochures and leaflets regarding the fund are also displayed there.

Contributions and pledges received in 2016

(United States dollars)

Donor	*Amount*	*Date of receipt*
Australia	194 317	9 March 2016
Germany	222 965	7 June 2016
India	25 000	15 January 2016
Luxembourg	16 760	24 August 2016
Qatar	10 000	31 May 2016
Saudi Arabia	75 000	3 June 2016
South Africa	3 698	4 April 2016
Spain	38 043	29 November 2016
United Arab Emirates	30 000	25 February 2016
United Kingdom	139 921	26 August and 28 November 2016
Holy See	2 500	17 October 2016
Total	**758 204**	

IV. Twenty-first session of the Board of Trustees

12. The twenty-first session of the Board of Trustees was held in Geneva from 28 November to 2 December 2016. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the fund and the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery on 2 December 2016 were both celebrated during the session, and one day of the session was devoted to an expert panel on child victims of slavery. Furthermore, in accordance with the new mission statement of the fund, adopted on 26 November 2015 (A/71/272, para. 27), the Board increasingly pursued closer coordination with other actors in the field of contemporary forms of slavery. During the session, the Board had fruitful exchanges with representatives of Member States and OHCHR senior management, including the Director of the Human Rights Council Treaty Mechanisms Division, the Chief of the External Outreach Services and the Chief of the Human Rights Treaties Branch. The Board also met with relevant special procedure mandate holders of the Human Rights Council, in particular, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and its consequences, and with OHCHR staff who support the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material and the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, as well as the secretariat of the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children. The Board was particularly pleased with the growing cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, and remains committed to promoting coordination with all relevant stakeholders.

13. The Board is of the view that Alliance 8.7[2] provides a much-needed framework for coordination among all relevant actors, within which the participation of the fund would ensure that the perspectives of the victims are represented and addressed.

A. Grant-making recommendations

14. After the successful conclusion of the 2017 call for proposals and the subsequent intersessional evaluation and selection process by the secretariat, at its twenty-first session the Board was presented with 87 applications for project grants, amounting to $1.9 million requested for the assistance of victims of contemporary forms of slavery worldwide. The Board decided to accord priority to the review of project proposals that had been highly recommended for funding by the secretariat. Through a competitive review based on both geographic and thematic criteria, it recommended the approval of 33 project grants, for a total of $553,000. Those recommendations were approved by the High Commissioner on behalf of the Secretary-General on 20 December 2016. Five project proposals, totalling $110,000, remained on a reserve list, awaiting additional income to be received by the fund before 31 December 2016. Owing to insufficient income, the implementation of those five vetted project proposals was not financed in 2017.

15. Through the 33 grants approved by the Board, in 2017 the fund will assist non-governmental organizations in 32 countries by supporting 8 projects in Asia, 8 in Africa, 4 in Eastern Europe, 6 in Latin America and the Caribbean and 7 in the countries of the Western European and other States group. Through the awarded projects, more than 37,000 victims are expected to be provided with redress and rehabilitation services after having been subjected to contemporary forms of slavery, such as the worst forms of child labour, domestic servitude, forced and early marriage, bonded and forced labour, sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons for labour and sexual exploitation. By way of example, in 2017, the fund will partner with an organization in Nigeria assisting victims of sexual slavery and of the worst forms of child labour who are rescued from Boko Haram and other armed groups in the north-eastern provinces of the country. In Brazil, the aim of the approved project is to provide multidimensional assistance to victims of forced labour working in eucalyptus and rubber plantations, cattle ranches and coal mines. In Iraq, the fund will support, for the first time, an organization providing legal assistance to victims of sexual slavery and forced labour.

16. Figures I and II illustrate the breakdown of the 33 grants approved for 2017, by region and by type of contemporary slavery.

[2] Alliance 8.7 was created to help national governments achieve the ambitious undertaking of target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, in coordination with workers' and employers' organizations, civil society organizations, the United Nations and other international organizations. Alliance 8.7 is part of an integrated strategy to promote fundamental freedoms, principles and rights at work and collaborates closely with existing programmes. It will also foster synergies with partnerships on other Sustainable Development Goals. At the initial stage, the International Labour Organization is serving as the secretariat for Alliance 8.7. In that role, it is working in close consultation with other United Nations agencies, governments, workers' and employers' organizations and other interested partners.

Figure I
Grants awarded for 2017, by region

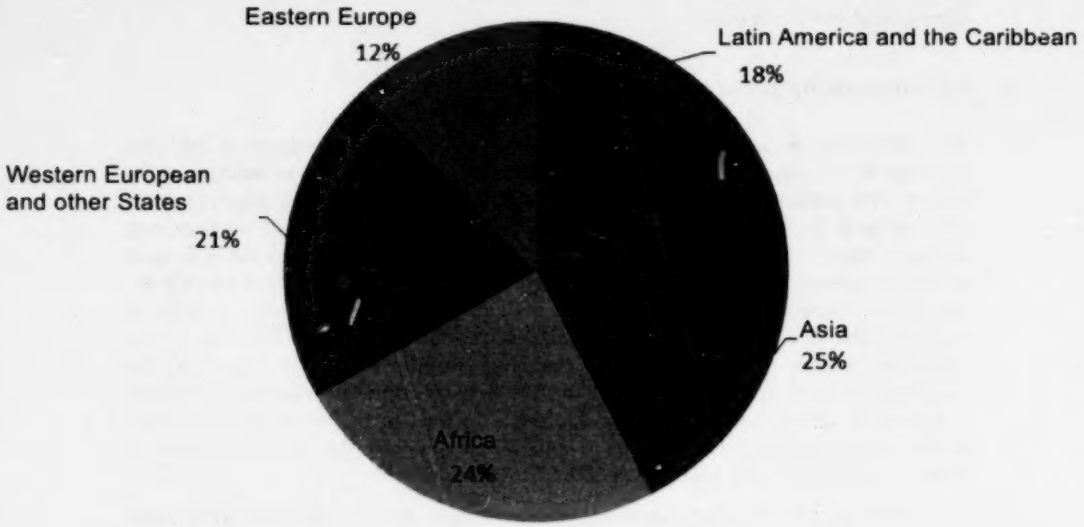
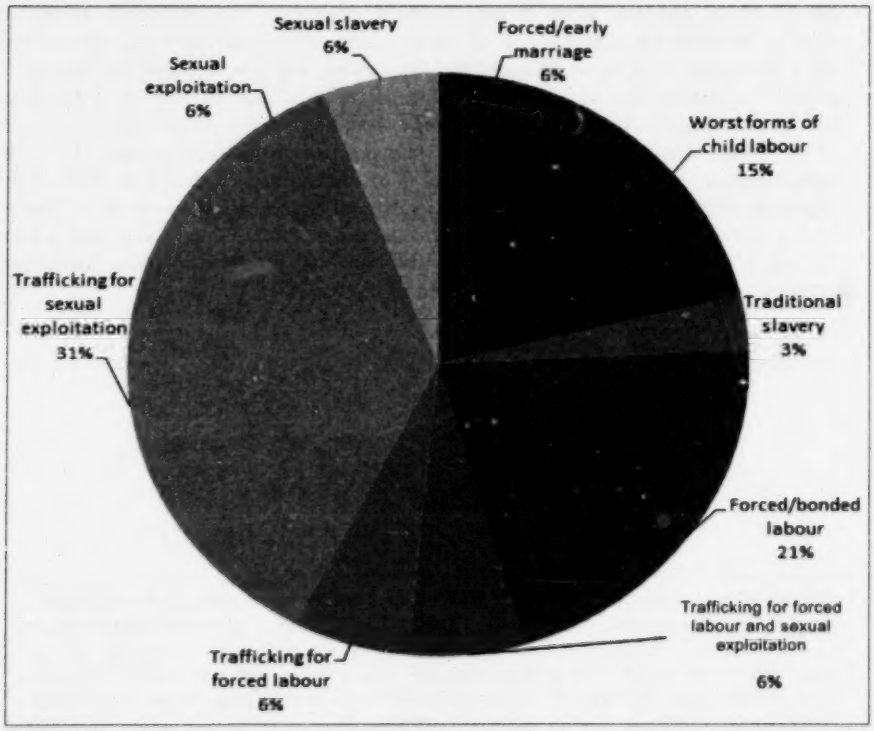


Figure II
Grants awarded for 2017, by type of contemporary slavery



B. Policy recommendations

17. During its twenty-first session, the Board also reviewed its working methods to bring them more closely into line with the fund's new mission statement. In particular, the Board recommended that, as of 2018, annual grants should be raised to a maximum of $30,000. In addition, a two-cycle gap should be applied to project proposals that had been evaluated as inadmissible and/or not recommended during the pre-screening phase by the secretariat. Finally, the Board reiterated the general rule of a one-cycle gap for projects that had been granted funding for five consecutive years.

18. The Board also recommended holding an expert panel to enable discussions and the sharing of best practices on rehabilitation and redress for victims of slavery during its twenty-second session (27 November-1 December 2017).

19. Furthermore, for the 2018 call for project proposals, the Board recommended that priority be given to proposals intended to provide specialized assistance to victims of slavery and that demonstrate a sound methodology for victims' rehabilitation and redress. Particular attention would be given to proposals intended to assist women and children victims of slavery as a consequence of conflicts and humanitarian crises, as well as proposals geared towards supporting victims' access to justice. The High Commissioner approved all of the recommendations, on behalf of the Secretary-General, on 20 December 2016.

C. Cooperation with Member States

20. On 30 November 2016, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations organized a luncheon to showcase the impact of the projects supported by the fund, which was attended by the Permanent Representatives of Australia, the Netherlands, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States of America and Uruguay, and of the Holy See, to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other international organizations. The aim of the event was to increase the visibility of the fund and encourage support in order to reach the fund's target of a minimum of $2 million in contributions per year, which is required to enable it to effectively fulfil its mandate and contribute towards the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal target 8.7 (see A/71/272). During the event, the fund's solid, victim-centred methodology, the quality control of its operations and its policy of small-scale grants that generate a quantifiable impact on the lives of rights holders were highlighted as being among its greatest strengths.

D. International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

21. On the occasion of the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, on 2 December 2016, the fund convened an expert panel on the theme "Revealing the child faces of modern slavery", which focused on the incidence of contemporary forms of slavery among children and the specific requirements for their rehabilitation. The panel featured the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, a representative of the International Labour Organization (ILO), and experts from selected civil society organizations around the world working with child victims of contemporary forms of slavery with the support of the fund. The event was attended by representatives of over 50 Member States, civil society organizations and United Nations entities as

well as the general public. Australia and Germany provided funding for the organization of the panel. A public debate followed the panellists' presentations.

22. In his statement, the High Commissioner for Human Rights emphasized that modern slavery was often hidden from sight and he paid tribute to the work of professionals around the world, including those supported by the fund, who, on a daily basis, assisted child victims of contemporary forms of slavery. The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery shared her experiences of meeting with child victims of contemporary forms of slavery around the world and underscored the devastation, pain, humiliation and absolute destruction of the human spirit caused by the continued existence of the institutions and practices of slavery. The representative of ILO reminded the audience that slavery happened in almost every economic sector around the world, and that a shocking 5.5 million children were victims of contemporary forms of slavery. Other speakers, including a former victim of child slavery and professionals from rehabilitation centres financially supported by the fund, provided moving accounts of efforts and successes in terms of assistance to victims of modern slavery through different rehabilitation programmes, such as legal and psychosocial support and economic empowerment.

23. In his message on the occasion of the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, the Secretary-General also urged Member States, businesses, foundations and other donors and potential donors to support the fund so as to enable it to provide crucial rehabilitation to victims of modern slavery worldwide.

V. How to contribute to the fund

24. The fund depends on voluntary contributions from Governments, non-governmental organizations and other private or public entities. Donors should indicate "for the slavery fund, account SH" on a payment order. For information on how to contribute, donors are requested to contact:

Secretariat of the United Nations voluntary trust fund on contemporary forms of slavery
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations
CH 1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Email: slaveryfund@ohchr.org
Tel: +41 22 917 9376
Fax: +41 22 917 9017

www.ohchr.org/slaveryfund

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

25. **Since the adoption of a new mission statement for the fund, in 2015, the Board of Trustees of the fund, jointly with the secretariat, has undertaken outreach initiatives to increase the visibility of the fund and enhance coordination with other actors involved in the eradication of all forms of slavery, including the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery and other relevant special procedure mandate holders, ILO and the United Nations voluntary trust fund for victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children. As the Board noted, the magnitude of contemporary forms of slavery requires strong engagement within the framework provided by**

Alliance 8.7, including through the support provided by the fund, with its unique victim-centred approach and impact.

26. **The Secretary-General endorses the Board's encouragement to all Member States to help the fund reach the symbolic target of $1 million in contributions by the end of 2017.**

27. **For 2018, the fund will continue to give priority to projects providing specialized assistance to victims and project applications that propose activities spanning a number of years, so as to ensure continuity and greater impact. It will also prioritize the needs of women and children victims of slavery, in particular those living in situations of conflict and humanitarian crises, through the awarding of larger grants (ranging from $20,000 to $30,000).**

28. **The Secretary-General, in line with his message to mark the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, urges Member States, businesses, foundations and other potential donors to support the fund so that it can provide crucial rehabilitation assistance to victims of modern slavery worldwide.**

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Seventy-second session
Item 73 (b) of the provisional agenda
Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

The role of the Ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraphs 5 and 6 of General Assembly resolution 71/200, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the role of the Ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular on the obstacles encountered by States in implementing Assembly resolution 69/168, as well as on best practices in the work and functioning of the Ombudsman, mediator and other human rights institutions.

In follow-up to that request, on 24 February 2017 the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights sent questionnaires to the three groups of stakeholders: (a) States (see annex I); (b) ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions (see annex II); and (c) civil society actors (see annex III). Fourteen Member States, 60 ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions and 3 civil society organizations submitted replies to the questionnaires, thus providing information on the legal basis of their creation and functioning as well as on their funding, roles and activities, best practices, cooperation with international and regional institutions and networks, and obstacles encountered. On the basis of this information and its analysis, relevant conclusions and recommendations are formulated in the present report.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraphs 5 and 6 of General Assembly resolution 71/200, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on the role of the Ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, in particular on the obstacles encountered by States in implementing the resolution, as well as on best practices in the work and functioning of the Ombudsman, mediator and other human rights institutions. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to seek the views of States and other relevant stakeholders, in particular the Ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions, as well as civil society, in that regard, and to formulate recommendations on how to establish or strengthen such institutions.

2. In follow-up to the latter request, on 24 February 2017 the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights sent questionnaires to the three groups of stakeholders: (a) States (see annex I); (b) ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions (see annex II); and (c) civil society actors (see annex III). The methodology was aimed at ensuring a pool of concise, relevant and up-to-date information on the subject matter. Fourteen Member States, 60 ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions and 3 civil society organizations participated in the exercise by submitting replies to the questionnaires.

3. The present report is based on information contained in the submissions received.

II. Information received from States

4. Of the 14 replies received, 9 Governments reported having institutions enshrined in their constitutions and established subsequently by a founding law. Three institutions were reported to have been enshrined in the constitution only, and two established by law only.

5. In all 14 submissions, it was stated that the institutions were adequately funded to function effectively and efficiently.

6. None of the Governments gave clear answers as to whether they were developing and conducting outreach activities to raise public awareness on the role of their respective institutions. All Governments described outreach activities carried out by the institutions and not by themselves.

7. With regard to best practices, eight Governments reported that their institutions were a member of or were collaborating with international and regional networks of ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions. Three Governments mentioned that their institutions had been designated as national preventive mechanisms under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. One Government reported that its institution had been designated as the national monitoring mechanism under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

8. Only 1 Government referred to budgetary constraints preventing it from fully implementing General Assembly resolution 69/168, while the other 13 confirmed not having encountered any obstacles in the implementation of the resolution.

III. Information received from ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions

9. Replies to the questionnaire were received from 60 ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions, 32 of which are accredited by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. Among the accredited institutions, 27 enjoy "A" status (fully compliant with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles)) and 5 "B" status (partially compliant with the Paris Principles).

10. Thirty-four institutions reported that they were provided with both constitutional and legislative frameworks. Two institutions reported that they had been enshrined in the constitution only, while 22 had been established by law. Two institutions did not provide a reply to the relevant question.

11. Of the 60 institutions, 41 reported that they received adequate financial resources to discharge their mandate in an efficient and effective manner. Fourteen institutions invoked a lack of adequate funding for the full exercise of their mandate. Five institutions did not answer the relevant question.

12. With regard to best practices, 48 institutions reported that they were a member of or collaborating with international and regional institutions and networks, such as the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions, the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, the European Network of National Human Rights Institutions, the International Ombudsman Institute, the African Ombudsman and Mediators Association, the Ibero-American Federation of Ombudsmen and the European Ombudsman Institute. They also reported that they collaborated with peer institutions.

13. Fourteen institutions reported that they had been designated as a national preventive mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment: four "A" status national human rights institutions; two "B" status institutions; and eight institutions not accredited by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

14. Ten institutions reported that they engaged with the international human rights system by submitting written reports or delivering oral statements, attending sessions and following up on recommendations emanating from the universal periodic review, special procedures mechanisms and human rights treaty bodies.

15. Forty-nine institutions claimed to be fully or partially functioning in compliance with the Paris Principles, although 12 of those institutions are not accredited by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions. Eight institutions indicated that they did not function in line with the Paris Principles. Three institutions did not respond to the relevant question.

IV. Information received from civil society organizations

16. Three civil society organizations provided a response to the questionnaire.

17. The three organizations considered that the legal framework for the Ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions was adequate. They all noted that the Ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions should do more in order to raise awareness in their respective countries

of their role and purpose and indicated that failure by those institutions to do so resulted in their having lower visibility.

18. With regard to best practices, a civil society organization dealing with children's rights considered that complaint mechanisms and the function of national human rights institutions of initiating legal proceedings could be effective tools to protect vulnerable groups, including children.

V. Conclusion

19. Replies to the questionnaires were received from 7 per cent of Member States; 60 ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institutions, of which 53 per cent are accredited by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (45 per cent of "A" status national human rights institutions and 8 per cent of "B" status institutions); and three civil society organizations. The different levels of participation in activities relating to the implementation of resolution 71/200 among ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institutions, on the one hand, and among States and civil society actors, on the other hand, might reflect a low visibility of the institutions owing to the lack of outreach activities to raise awareness of their role, as indicated by one of the participants in the survey (see para. 17 above).

20. All Governments that responded confirmed that the Ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institutions operating in their country were fully funded, while 23 per cent of the institutions that replied expressed concern over the low or insufficient level of their funding. This discrepancy might indicate a lack of common understanding about the functions of such institutions and of the adequate funding needed to enable them to operate efficiently and effectively.

21. Article 18 (4) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment provides that "when establishing national preventive mechanisms, States Parties shall give due consideration to the Principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights". However, of the 14 institutions that reported that they had been designated as a national preventive mechanism, only four had been attributed "A" status.

VI. Recommendations

22. **Member States are encouraged to establish an independent Ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institutions and strengthen the structures and independence of existing institutions, in accordance with the Paris Principles.**

23. **Member States are encouraged to ensure that adequate funding is provided to their Ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institutions to enable them to discharge their mandate in an efficient and effective manner.**

24. **Member States should, when assigning the Ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institutions the role of national preventive mechanisms and national monitoring mechanisms, give due consideration to the Paris Principles, in accordance with article 18 (4) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and article 33 (2) of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**

25. **The Ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions should cooperate with relevant State bodies and develop cooperation with civil society organizations.**

26. **The Ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions should conduct awareness-raising activities on their roles and functions, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.**

27. **The Ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions should continue to engage with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, the International Ombudsman Institute and other regional networks and associations with a view to exchanging experiences, lessons learned and best practices.**

Annex I

Questionnaire sent to States on 24 February 2017

1. Have you established an independent and autonomous Ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institutions at the national and, where applicable, the local level?

2. Have you endowed the Ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institutions with an adequate constitutional and legislative framework as well as financial and all other appropriate means in order to ensure the efficient and independent exercise of their mandate and to strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of their actions?

3. Do you develop and conduct outreach activities at the national level in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders in order to raise awareness of the important role of the Ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institutions?

4. Please share best practices on the work and functioning of the Ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institutions, individually or in collaboration with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions and other international and regional ombudsman organizations.

5. Did you encounter any obstacles in the implementation of resolution 69/168 on the role of the Ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions in the promotion and protection of human rights, adopted by the General Assembly in December 2014?

6. Please provide any additional comment you may have.

Responses to the questionnaire were received from the Governments of Australia, Austria, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Maldives, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Qatar, Serbia and Swaziland.

Annex II

Questionnaire sent to ombudsman, mediator and other national human rights institutions on 24 February 2017

1. Do you consider that your institution has been established and strengthened as an independent and autonomous Ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institution?

2. Do you consider that your institution is provided with an adequate constitutional and legislative framework as well as financial and all other appropriate means in order to ensure the efficient and independent exercise of your institution's mandate and to strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of your institution's actions?

3. Do you develop and conduct outreach activities at the national level in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders in order to raise awareness of the important role of your institution?

4. Please share best practices on the work and functioning of your institution and on your institution's collaboration with international and regional ombudsman organizations.

5. Do you operate in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles) and other relevant international instruments?

6. Please provide any additional comment you may have.

Responses to the questionnaire were received from the following institutions:

"A" status national human rights institutions

Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission
Office of the Ombudsman of Argentina
Human Rights Defender of Armenia
Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina
National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms of Cameroon
Office of the Ombudsman of Costa Rica
Danish Institute for Human Rights
Office of the Ombudsman of Ecuador
National Council for Human Rights of Egypt
National Commission for Human Rights of Greece
Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights of Hungary
National Human Rights Commission of India
Consultative Commission on Human Rights of Luxembourg
National Human Rights Commission of Mexico
National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia
Office of the Ombudsman of Namibia
Netherlands Institute for Human Rights
New Zealand Human Rights Commission
Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Nicaragua
Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines
Ombudsman of Portugal
National Human Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea
High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation
Protector of Citizens (Ombudsman) of Serbia
Uganda Human Rights Commission

Equality and Human Rights Commission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance of the United Republic of Tanzania

"B" status institutions

National Consultative Commission for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights of Algeria
Ombudsman of Bulgaria
National Human Rights Commission of Honduras
Office of the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms of Montenegro
Slovak National Centre for Human Rights
Institutions not accredited by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
Federal Ombudsman of Belgium
National Human Rights Council of Brazil
National Human Rights Commission and Ombudsman of Burkina Faso
Ombudsman of Côte d'Ivoire
Public Defender of Rights (Ombudsman) of Czechia
Office of the Danish Parliamentary Ombudsman
Parliamentary Ombudsman of Greenland
National Human Rights Commission of Djibouti
Chancellor of Justice of Estonia
Parliamentary Ombudsman of Finland
Greek Ombudsman
Parliamentary Ombudsman of Iceland
Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission of Jordan
Commission on Administrative Justice (Office of the Ombudsman) of Kenya
Independent National Commission on Human Rights of Madagascar
Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Commission of the Republic of Korea
Parliamentary Ombudsman of Malta
Office of the Ombudsman of Mauritius
Office of the Ombudsman of New Zealand
Parliamentary Ombudsman of Norway
Federal Ombudsman of Pakistan
Office of the Ombudsman of the Philippines
Public Defender of Rights of Slovakia
Public Grievances Chamber of the Sudan
Parliamentary Ombudsmen of Sweden
Ombudsman Institution of Turkey
Office of the Public Protector of Zambia

Annex III

Questionnaire sent to civil society actors on 24 February 2017

1. Do you consider that an independent and autonomous Ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institutions have been created or strengthened at the national and, where applicable, the local level in your country?

2. Is the Ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institutions endowed with an adequate constitutional and legislative framework as well as financial and all other appropriate means in order to ensure the efficient and independent exercise of the Ombudsman's mandate and to strengthen the legitimacy and credibility of its actions?

3. Are outreach activities developed and conducted at the national level in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders in order to raise awareness of the important role of the Ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institutions?

4. Please share best practices on the work and functioning of the Ombudsman, mediator or other national human rights institutions in your country.

5. Please provide any additional comment you may have.

Responses to the questionnaire were received from three civil society actors.